

A

P L E A,

TO POWER AND PARLIAMENT,

FOR THE

WORKING CLASSES.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

HAVING, for some years past, viewed with sorrow the depressed state of large bodies of the working classes, and having examined with some labour and attention into the causes of their sufferings, I have ventured to submit the results to the Public.

I earnestly hope this statement (which has no reference to party differences) may assist in leading to gradual improvement in the condition of many industrious men.

R. A. S.

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A P L E A

FOR

THE WORKING CLASSES.

CHAPTER I.

ADVANCE IN COMFORT OF DIFFERENT CLASSES.

SINCE the beginning of the century no one can doubt that Great Britain has made rapid progress in power, wealth, and improvement.

The produce of our lands have been greatly increased, our manufactures are vastly augmented, our commerce is extended, and our exports and imports almost exceed belief. Astonishing improvements have been made in our roads, canals, railways, and modes of conveyance. Public buildings of great utility and extent, and costing immense sums, have been erected. Private buildings, comprising dwellings of every

description in the metropolis, provincial towns, and the country, have risen up in the same period in a most astonishing manner. Within the last half century London has been extended on all sides, and excellent houses of various sizes and descriptions now occupy large spaces in place of fields and gardens, which formerly surrounded the capital. Innumerable villas, mansions, and suburban cottages are seen on every side. Something like the same rapid progress of improvement seem to have taken place in and about almost all our larger towns, and many others.* Besides the immense increase in wealth and population of our principal manufacturing and sea-port towns, our old country towns have many improved dwellings, added to their suburbs, or ornamenting the country near them. Inland watering-places, and sea-bathing towns filled with the upper or middle classes, have multiplied and extended during the same period; and from the mouth of the Thames to the Bristol Channel the coast

* "In nothing is improvement more apparent than in the condition of the dwellings of the middle classes." The improvement has not been extended in equal degree to the dwellings of the working classes. Those in the large towns are still for the most part comfortless, *ill furnished, unwholesome, and ill kept.*" — *Porter, Progress of the Nation*, p. 533. 2d edit.

is studded with thousands of dwellings, inhabited by persons in easy circumstances. If we traverse the country in any direction we shall find the mansions of the nobility, gentry, and proprietors rebuilt or greatly improved since the beginning of the century. Many additional country-houses have been erected, each the centre of a little circle of comfort to those around it.

In like manner, in many districts, we shall find new farmhouses, and in almost every rural village and hamlet some snug homestead, sometimes with a little shop annexed to it, calculated for a small tradesman or dealer.

It is impossible for us to contemplate these things in every part of the realm throughout the length and breadth of our country, without feelings of complacency, often of pride, sometimes we hope of gratitude.

As we view these wonderful improvements which half a century has brought forth, we attribute them, perhaps with pardonable complacency, to the freedom and excellence of our government, to the energy of our national character, to the untiring industry of our workmen.

Perhaps we may feel a desire to know what *is the condition of those workmen* to whom we owe so much. What is the state of comfort of those manufacturers and labourers whose con-

stant toil has formed and fashioned the noble works we admire; whose perseverance has raised or adorned and furnished those edifices which stand around us, and whose industry has created the capital supplying the means for these mighty changes!*

* Mr. Porter, in his work on the Progress of the Nation, happily describes "the improvements which have taken place in the habitations and comforts of the middle classes" (p. 532.). It would be easy to support his statements by official returns of various kinds bearing on the question. We hope and believe with him "that the elements of social improvement have been and are producing an increased amount of comfort to the great bulk of the people." We fear it will be found, however, that the working people, especially vast bodies of unskilled labourers, have not had secured to them their due and reasonable proportion in this advance of social improvement.

CHAPTER II.

STATE OF THE LABOURING CLASSES.

THE question will recur to every thinking mind — Have the labouring classes (those whose hands created the vast amount of wealth about us) received *their* fair share? Is *their* condition improved in proportion to that of others? Have the laws, customs, and regulations of the country watched over the welfare of these multitudes of humble working men, who stand most in need of protection, and to whom we are so deeply indebted? Have they had provided for them, such fair opportunities of improving their moral and physical condition as they ought to have? Have they had the means of enjoying the decencies and comforts of life placed within their reach? for these greatly assist in forming the minds and manners of men. Has their health, and strength, and power to labour (their sole possessions) been protected by the laws of the country? Have they been provided with the means of instruction for their

children, and any sufficient facilities for attending religious worship themselves? Has any adequate effort been made to enable or induce them to provide beforehand for those fluctuations in the demand for, and wages of, labour, which experience shows are frequently occurring? Lastly, Has any provision been made to enable the working people to enjoy occasional holidays (as a relaxation from their toil) in comfort and with families? Have any facilities been given for their breathing the fresh air, and being enabled to partake of any amusements, *duly regulated*, on these leisure days?

These are questions of deep interest to every one, well worth a little trouble to investigate.

CHAPTER III.

AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS.

THE labouring people of Great Britain are divided into two large classes, viz. 1st. Agricultural labourers residing chiefly in the country; 2d. Workmen residing in towns and populous districts, comprising manufacturers, miners, artisans, mechanics, and others working in cities and their vicinity.

With respect to agricultural labourers, we would only make a few short and cursory remarks on their condition. They have the advantages of fresh air and constant exercise, and hence have better health and longer life (as shown by the returns of mortality) than workmen in towns. In some places, and on the estates of considerate and benevolent landowners, their condition has been much improved; and many efforts have lately been made by societies and individuals to add to their comforts. As a body, however, and looking generally throughout the kingdom, we shall be obliged to confess that their welfare has been greatly neglected, and that they have received from the legislature little of that care

and protection which should have been extended to them.

Successive reports of Committees of the House of Commons show, that the benevolent provisions of the Poor Law had been permitted to degenerate into gross abuses. That these abuses (arising in great measure from the neglect and mistakes of magistrates and overseers) prevailed extensively in *twenty-six* of the southern counties of England, and more or less tainted portions of the rest.

Illegal practices had been introduced of making up wages, paying cottage rents, and fixed allowances for children, and other such payments, from the poor-rate. Thus the condition of the industrious labourer had been injured, the independence of the class was undermined, and a premium to improvidence and profligacy given. *

The extensive evils arising from these causes were pointed out by many writers, and at length were examined and reported upon by Com-

* Report of Committee of House of Commons on the Poor Laws, 1817; chairman, the Hon. Stourges Bourne. Report do. 1819; chairman, the Hon. Stourges Bourne. Report do. 1824, on Labourers' Wages; chairman, Lord John Russell. Report do. 1828, on the Employment of able-bodied poor from the Poor Rates; chairman, Mr. Slaney. Report do. 1834, of Commission of Inquiry into the Poor Laws, &c.

mittees of the House of Commons, and extensive alterations recommended.

Any real improvement was however long delayed. In the meantime, the discontent and misery, arising from these and other sources, broke into a kind of rural rebellion in some of the southern districts, and incendiary fires were seen from time to time in the stackyards and villages in almost all the counties along the coast from Suffolk and Essex to Somersetshire, and as far inland as Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire.*

At length the act of 4 & 5 William IV. c. 75., commonly called the "New Poor Law Act," was passed. This act put an end to many of the abuses of the law which before existed; refused aid to able-bodied applicants, unless they entered the Union House, made use of other tests to detect impostors, introduced an improved arrangement and separation of different classes of paupers, and other useful improve-

* The abuses described were shown to exist more or less in twenty-six counties south of a line drawn from Gloucester to Stamford. In 1831 evidence was given before a Committee of the House of Lords on the Poor Law, to show that in eight northern counties, where there were few abuses, with a population exceeding two millions, the rate was 754,000*l.*, and in eight southern counties (with abuses), and where there were also about two millions in population, the poor rate was 1,510,000*l.*, or double the others.

ments and checks on wasteful and illegal expenditure.

The amount annually expended in relief, or support of the poor was thus gradually lessened from 6,317,000*l.* in 1834, to 4,460,000*l.* in 1837, which however is since increased to upwards of 5,000,000*l.* in 1845. *

We may hope that by this means, combined with greater attention to the state of the working classes in rural districts, considerable improvement may gradually be worked in their condition, and that they will become more provident, industrious, and independent. On the other hand, no one can expect that such a change can take place except in the course of years, or can hope that the degradation and discontent consequent on the prevalence of the abuses of the Poor Law system can be eradicated in this generation. †

Whilst we may acknowledge the necessity for a sterner administration of the law than before existed, we cannot but lament, that some of its provisions are of a very harsh nature, and

* Report of Poor Law Commissioners for 1846.

† In 1828, returns showed that in twenty parishes of Suffolk, 2490 persons received from the poor-rate, of whom 607, or one-fourth, were able-bodied men. In Essex, of 3030 relieved in certain parishes, 979, or nearly *one-third*, were able-bodied men. In Herts, of 2437, 877, or above *one-third*, were able-bodied men. A truly lamentable state of things!

that the mode of carrying out its provisions have in some cases caused much suffering. Though these abuses are removed, and considerable improvement in the state of the peasantry has taken place, especially where the proprietors take a kindly interest in their welfare, yet we are compelled to come to the conclusion, that viewing their *general* condition, and as a class, the agricultural and rural labourers of England have by no means kept pace in improvement* with the middle and higher classes; and that they have not secured to them, as they ought to have, their fair share of the general increase of wealth and comfort, which they do so much to procure for others.

It will be found that the wages of agricultural labour have not kept pace with the cost of the necessaries of life; but measured by the price of wheat is diminished rather than increased. †

* Thus it was shown, in 1828, that the proportion of persons receiving parish relief and their families had increased from 1 in 12, in 1790, to 1 in 9 on the population in 1801, to 1 in 8 in 1811, and in 1827 to 1 in 7. In several counties to a much larger proportion, and in Sussex where the cost was 1*l.* per head on the whole population of the county, one year the numbers receiving relief and their families amounted to every third person in many parishes.

† If then wages be measured in pints of wheat, it will

If we ourselves examine the dwellings of the peasantry who are not favoured by some especial advantage, we shall find how often they are destitute of the comforts and decencies of life.

If we turn over the pages of the able report of the Commissioners of the Poor Law in 1832, or of the Poor Law Commissioners on the sanatory condition of the labouring population of Great Britain, and of the local reports †, what a melancholy account shall we find of the state of the peasantry in most of the counties of England!

Whether we look to accounts of the western counties, or of the eastern districts, of the midland provinces, or of the labouring classes in the north, we shall find much to lament and to regret; and ample cause for sorrow and some self-reproach, that the earlier attention of the legislature and the public has not been turned to serious efforts to remove or lessen the extensive evils described, which appear incompatible with comfort and contentment, or good

be found in fifty years they have considerably diminished; great suffering has arisen from the constant *fluctuations* in price of this first necessary of life, increased by mistaken interference and changes of currency, and varying in the greatest degree from 50s. per quarter to 120s.

† Presented to both Houses of Parliament, by command of her Majesty, July, 1842.

moral habits, amid a large class of our population!

Amid these reports we find some accounts of a gratifying nature, showing great improvement in the dwellings and condition of their cottage-tenants, carried out by benevolent proprietors; yet, on the whole, we find in these valuable reports, as in other works on the same subject, ample proof that the agricultural labourers of England have not improved in condition in proportion to other classes above them*; and that they have *not* had secured to

* The evidence of this we find in various reports of Parliament of undoubted authority, a few extracts of which are subjoined; the causes, especially as regards all the southern counties of England, we believe to have been chiefly abuses in the poor law, continued for many years without any efficient check by the legislature or the educated classes. Thus, in the Report of the House of Commons on the Poor Laws of 1817, it is said — “The result appears to have been highly prejudicial to the moral habits and happiness of a great body of the people;” and that report throughout lays down the true principles of poor law administration, and describes in strong terms the evils arising from the abuses shown. In the Report of 1819, the Committee speak of “the calamities *to the kingdom* which must attend the continued progress of this evil.” They lay down the true principles which regulate the demand and supply of labour (p. 7.), and point out “how the evil of the present system may be arrested, and its prejudicial effect in a moral, political, and economical view be gradually and materially

them, by the vigilance of the legislature and the public, that *fair share* of increasing comfort to

corrected" (p. 10.). *But nothing effectual was done.* The committee of 1824, on the practice of paying wages from the poor rates, say, "The evil of this practice augments itself; and the steady, hard-working labourer is converted into the degraded and inefficient pensioner of the parish." The mischiefs that follow are then ably described, and it is truly said, "By far the worst consequences of the system is the degradation of the character of the labouring classes" (p. 4.). In Suffolk, Sussex, Beds, Bucks, Dorset, and Wilts, paying wages from poor rates has been carried to the greatest extent; Norfolk, Kent, Huntingdon, and Devonshire are likewise affected by it" (p. 5.). "A scale of allowance is drawn up by the magistrates in many counties." "On this allowance, whether idle or industrious, the labourer relies as a right" (p. 7.). *Nothing of consequence was altered.* The Report of 1828 on Poor Laws refers to and confirms the statements of the former committees, and states the abuses described "As most injurious to the industrious habits and permanent happiness of the poorer classes;" says "that no material improvement has taken place in the counties (above) alluded to in this respect, and that the same system has been acted on in parts of Kent, Herts, Surrey, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Middlesex, Berks, and Oxfordshire" (p. 4.). They add, "These abuses involve the depression and degradation of a numerous and valuable class, who have the strongest title to the protection of the legislature." They then suggest remedies, and a return to the directions of the law and the practice of the North of England. *But nothing was done* till 1833, when a Commission of Inquiry was issued: its able report appeared in 1834, detailing in a

which they are entitled, and which they see others enjoying around them.

most convincing way the "enormous evils" arising from the abuses of the poor laws, and recommending remedies which were afterwards carried out by law in the Poor Law Act, 4 & 5 Wm. 4. c. 76.

Those acquainted with the *general* condition of agricultural labourers well know and lament that the peasant or his widow, when past work, have seldom any resource in old age but the parish; that in case of the illness of his family, the doctor's bill, against which he has usually no way of providing, almost ruins him; and that, however orderly and frugal during long years of industry, he has little chance of permanently improving his position in life, or of even attaining the great object of his ambition — in keeping a cow!

CHAPTER IV.

STATE OF THE WORKING CLASSES IN TOWNS, ETC.

LET us now turn to see what is the condition of the other great division of our working people, viz. labourers residing in towns and populous districts, comprising manufacturers, miners, artizans, mechanics, and others occupied in cities or their vicinities.

The numbers and importance of this class have increased in a surprising manner during the last half century. "In 1790 the number of manufacturers and workmen living in and about towns was to the labourers in the country districts as one to two. In 1840 the proportions became completely reversed, and the numbers of the former were to the latter class as two to one. In forty years from 1800, agricultural labourers increased from 40 to 45 per cent.; whilst workmen in towns and manufacturing districts augmented 120 per cent., and in great towns much more."

We might have supposed that the increasing numbers and importance of the working classes dwelling in great towns and populous districts,

would have attracted the attention and gained the protection of the legislature, and that timely *precautions* would have been taken to shield them from unnecessary suffering, and to remedy or lessen, as far as practicable, the evils inseparable in some measure from their situations and employments.

It will be found, however, that this is not the case. Some of the more intelligent and skilled labourers of this class have indeed much amended their position; but in an honest view of the moral and physical condition of the great mass of these poor persons and their families, we shall find ample ground for confessing that these industrious multitudes have *not* improved in comfort, in any thing like a fair proportion to the middle and higher classes, and that they have *not* had afforded to them hitherto by the legislature that provident attention which might have much added to their health, happiness, and contentment.

Proofs. — We find ample proofs of this statement in works of authority, which may be briefly noticed, comprising accounts of the condition of the working classes in the metropolis, and the large towns and populous districts of the country.

In a Report on physical causes of fever in

the metropolis, removable by proper sanitary measures, by Neil Arnott, M. D., and James Phillips Kay, M. D.; and in a Report on the condition of the Bethnal Green and Whitechapel Districts, by Southwood Smith, M. D.*; and in a Report, by the same gentleman, on the prevalence of fever in twenty metropolitan parishes†—in these works we shall find a melancholy account of the sufferings of many of the working classes in London, from causes *removable* by due legislative regulation.

In March 1840, a select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed “to inquire into the circumstances affecting the health of the inhabitants of large towns and populous districts, with a view to improved sanitary regulations for their benefit.”

This Committee examined much evidence on the subject, and reported to the House in June following. ‡

* Fourth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1838. Appendix, A, B. 1.

† Fifth Annual Report of Poor Law Commissioners, 1839. Appendix C. No. 2. These reports were also printed separately in 1839, as Reports on the Sanitary State of the Labouring Classes as affected by the situation and construction of their dwellings in and about the metropolis.

‡ Report from the Select Committee on the Health of Towns, ordered to be printed, 17th June, 1840.

In their report we find the following passages : — “Your Committee have inquired carefully into the matters submitted to them, and find that sanitary regulations in many of the principal towns of the realm are *most imperfect* and neglected, and that hence result great evils, *suffering*, and expense to large bodies of the community.”

The Report proceeds to state that “the increase of population of England and Wales, in 30 years, from 1801 to 1831, has been something more than 47 per cent;” whilst the actual increase of numbers in five of our most important provincial towns has been, on an average, double that amount in the same period, viz.: Manchester, 109 per cent.; Glasgow, 108; Birmingham, 73; Leeds, 99; Liverpool, 100*; giving an average increase of almost 98 per cent. in five cities, whose united population in 1831 amounted to 844,700. “The larger portion of this vast body of persons are engaged constantly in occupations connected with manufactures and commerce.”

* The rapid increase in these great towns has continued in even an augmented ratio to 1841, the period of the last census; Birmingham reaching in 1841 to 181,000 people; Manchester and Salford to 353,290, from 94,000 in 1801, being an increase of 272 per cent. — *Porter's Progress*, p. 26.

After some statements showing the vast increase in the population of great towns within the present century, the Committee say—"They have confined their investigation to the condition of certain populous towns, which might be considered as samples of others similarly situated. They have especially directed their attention to localities in which the working and poorer classes chiefly reside, with a view, if evils are found to exist there, within reach of legislative remedy, to make such suggestions of improvement as may appear practicable."

They state that on a comparison of different districts, that, *cæteris paribus*, the mortality increases as the density of the population increases; and "where the density and the population are the same, that the rate of mortality depends upon the efficiency of the ventilation and of the means which are employed for the removal of impurities." *

The Report continues: "Your Committee have made inquiries into the state of the dwellings of the poorer classes in various parts of the metropolis, in Dublin, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Hull, Birming-

* *Vide* First Report, Registrar General, on Births, Deaths, &c.

ham, Coventry, and several other large towns; and though there is a great difference in many of the cases examined, they would state, as *a general result*, that evils of *a most extensive and afflicting nature are found to prevail affecting the health and comfort of vast bodies of their fellow-subjects, and which might be removed or much lessened by proper sanitary regulations.*"

After saying, "that evidence has been laid before them, depicting the miserably neglected condition of the abodes of multitudes of the working classes in the eastern parts of London," they add "The same remarks apply, though with somewhat diminished force, in various other parts of London inhabited by the poorer classes."

In another part of the Report it is said, "Evidence of undoubted credit and of the most melancholy description has been laid before your Committee, showing the neglected and imperfect state of the sewerage, cleansing, and paving in many parts of London inhabited *chiefly by the working classes*; and similar evidence applies with more or less force to many other great towns, the state of which has been investigated, as Dublin, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford," &c.

"Your Committee (continues the Report)

do not wish to go into details as to the miserable and neglected state of the dwellings of the poorer classes in various districts of the metropolis and other large towns, but refer to the evidence for that purpose, in which statements of the most melancholy and appalling nature will be found.* It will there be seen that the sewerage, drainage, and cleansing is (in many places inhabited by dense masses of the working classes) greatly neglected; that the most necessary precautions to preserve their health in many cases appear to have been forgotten; that in consequence fevers and other disorders of a contagious and fatal character are shown to prevail to a very alarming extent, causing wide-spread misery among the families of the sufferers, often entailing weakness and prostration of strength among the survivors, and becoming the source of great expense to the parishes and more opulent classes."

They add (referring to the evidence of various persons), "many details will be found exemplifying the severe and extensive evils borne by the humbler classes, from neglect of proper sanitary regulations and precautions." The wretched and neglected state of a large portion of London inhabited by the poorer classes is then ex-

* *Vide* the evidence annexed to the Report.

hibited, and the constant ravages of fever thence arising. "The Report states that in Liverpool there were 7800 inhabited cellars, occupied by upwards of 39,000 persons, being one-fifth of all the working classes in that great town; and that the great proportion of these inhabited cellars were dark, damp, confined, ill-ventilated, and dirty." In addition to these, it is stated that 80,000 of the working classes reside in 2400 courts in Liverpool; most of which are close and unhealthy, being built up at the sides and end, and the entrance under a narrow archway. The state of these courts is described as almost utterly neglected, with no underground sewers, and no attention to cleansing. "In Manchester, nearly 15,000 persons, being 12 per cent. of the working classes, live in cellars, and in the adjacent town of Salford 3300. In Leeds, with a population of above 80,000 persons, the state of the streets, courts, and dwellings inhabited by the working classes, appears greatly neglected." After referring to many other populous places where similar evils exist*, the Report describes the state of Glasgow, where the rate of mortality has increased most rapidly, being in 1821 one in thirty-nine, and

* *Vide* evidence as to Bolton, population 50,000; Ashton, Stayley, and Duckingfield, 60,000; Bradford, 90,000, &c. &c.

in 1838 one in twenty-six; showing the frightful increase from one in thirty-nine to one in twenty-six in seventeen years.* After advert-
ing to the state of other places where these evils prevail, they proceed to say — “Your Committee have thus laid before the House an imperfect abstract of the facts proved before them in evidence, showing the neglect of due sanatory regulations applicable to improve the health and increase the comfort of great bodies of the poorer classes.” After alluding to the wide-spread moral evils arising from these causes, and to the great cost cast on the country by the illness of numbers, the Committee proceed to suggest remedies and to recommend improvements in the law and regulations relating to these subjects, which are detailed in the report, and conclude, “by most earnestly recommending all those who by fortune, station, or trust are placed in a situation to carry out these views, to exert themselves to the utmost and without delay, in aiding the improvements suggested in these several towns and neighbourhoods.”†

* Dr. Cowan's Vital Statistics.

† *Vide* Report, &c. Upwards of forty witnesses from different towns were examined before this Committee, which sat between two and three months.

General Report on the Sanatory Condition of the Labouring Classes. By Mr. Chadwick, Secretary to the Poor Law Commission, 1842.

In July, 1842, was laid before Parliament and printed, the General Report on the Sanatory Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain, by Mr. Chadwick, Secretary to the Poor Law Commission.* This excellent work did the greatest credit to the ability, perseverance, and intelligence of its benevolent author. It awakened, by the clearness and force of its statements, great public interest in favour of the large bodies of the working classes, who were shown to be suffering most severely from the want of sanatory laws and regulations for their benefit. It would be useless to give long extracts from a work happily so well known, widely dispersed, of undoubted authority, and great interest. But it may be well to give in a few lines an account of the principal deductions to be drawn from

* This Report was drawn up in compliance with the request of a letter by Lord John Russell (then Secretary of State for the Home Department) to the Poor Law Commissioners, dated August, 1839, desiring inquiry to be made as to the extent to which causes of disease, (stated in Appendix A and Appendix C of these 4th and 5th Reports) may be found to prevail among the labouring classes.

it. The Report is very well arranged, and has a good table of contents. It contains a masterly account of

1. The general condition of the residences of the labouring classes, where disease is found to be most prevalent.

2. Public arrangements, external to the residences, by which the sanatory condition of the labouring classes is affected.

3. Circumstances chiefly in the internal economy and bad ventilation of places of work, workmen's lodging-houses, and dwellings, and the domestic habits affecting the health of the labouring classes.

4. Comparative chances of life in different classes of the community.

5. Pecuniary burdens created by the neglect of sanatory measures. It then proceeds to,

6. Evidence of the effects of preventive measures in raising the standard of health in the chances of life; and concludes with a consideration of,

7. The principles of legislation and the state of the existing law for the protection of public health, and suggestions for various remedial measures to lessen the evils so ably described.

The evidence on which the Report rests is drawn from the personal observation of the the author, together with abstracts and extracts

from the accounts given by different poor law commissioners, medical men, relieving and parish officers, and others well acquainted with the state of the working classes in towns and the country. It comprises an account of the condition of the labouring population in most of our counties and many of our largest towns, and extends to Scotland. It was followed by two volumes, the first containing twenty-six Reports by different assistant poor law commissioners, physicians, and others, on the sanatory condition of various counties, districts, and large towns in England. The second contained seventeen reports of a like nature relating to Scotland.

In these works will be found matters of deep interest to all those who are desirous to improve the condition, or do justice to the working classes of this country. There will be seen ample details, comprising and extending greatly the evidence given before the Committee on Health of Towns, of the House of Commons in 1840, before adverted to.

Throughout these volumes will be found the clearest proofs that the labouring population, especially those (now so greatly increased) living in towns and populous districts, have *not* increased in comfort in proportion to the middle and higher classes, and that they have not had

afforded to them hitherto, by the legislature, that provident attention which might have added to their health, happiness, and contentment.

The summary, or conclusions, from Mr. Chadwick's excellent work are given nearly in the following terms* :

“ That the various forms of disease caused, aggravated, or propagated, chiefly among the labouring classes, by atmospheric impurities, produced by decomposing animal and vegetable substances, by damp and filth and close dwellings, prevail amongst the population in every part of the kingdom, as they have been found to prevail in the lowest districts of the metropolis.

“ That where those circumstances are removed by drainage, cleansing, better ventilation, and other means of diminishing atmospheric impurity, the frequency and intensity of such disease is abated.

“ That high prosperity in respect to employment, wages, and food, have afforded the labouring classes no exemptions from attacks of epidemic disease.

“ That the formation of all habits of cleanliness is obstructed by defective supplies of water.

* *Vide* Chap. IX. p. 369. Recapitulation.

“ That the annual loss of life from filth and bad ventilation are greater than the loss from death or wounds in any wars in which the country has been engaged in modern times.

“ That of the 43,000 cases of widowhood, and 112,000 cases of destitute orphanage, relieved from the poor rate in England and Wales alone, it appears that the greatest proportion of deaths of the heads of families occurred from the above specified and other removeable causes. That their ages were thirteen years below the natural probabilities of life, &c.

“ That the ravages of epidemics, and other diseases, do not diminish, but tend to increase the pressure of population.

“ That the younger population, bred up under noxious physical agencies, is inferior in physical organisation and general health; and that the population so exposed is less susceptible of moral influences, and the effects of education are more transient than with a healthy population.

“ That these adverse circumstances tend to produce an adult population short-lived, improvident, reckless, and intemperate, and with habitual avidity for sensual gratifications.

“ That the existing law for the protection of the public health, and the constitutional machinery for reclaiming its execution, such as

courts leet, have fallen into desuetude, and are in the state indicated by the prevalence of the evils they were intended to prevent.

“That the primary and most important measures, and, at the same time, the most practicable, and within the recognised province of public administration, are drainage, the removal of all refuse of habitations, streets, and roads, and the improvement of the supplies of water.”*

It is grievous and humiliating to think that these matters, so important to the welfare of multitudes, have been almost entirely neglected by the legislature and the influential classes during the last half century, whilst the population has so rapidly increased, and other classes have so much advanced in the scale of social comforts.

* The Report proceeds to show how these recommendations may be effected with ultimately great pecuniary savings to the public, and immediate extensive advantages to the community.

CHAPTER V.

COMMISSION ON THE HEALTH OF TOWNS, ETC., 1843.

IN May 1843, a commission was issued by Her Majesty to the Duke of Buccleugh, Lord Lincoln, and eleven other Commissioners therein named, to inquire "into the present state of large towns in populous districts in England and Wales, with reference to the causes of disease among the inhabitants, and into the best means of promoting and securing the public health under the operation of the laws and regulations at present in force, and the usages at present prevailing with regard to the drainage of lands; the erection, drainage, and ventilation of buildings; and the supply of water in such towns and districts, whether for purposes of health, or for the better protection of property from fire; and how far the public health and the condition of the poorer classes of the people of this realm, and the salubrity and safety of their dwellings, may be promoted by the amendment of such laws, regulations, and usages."

Full powers were given to the Commissioners

to inquire into the matters referred to them, to call before them and examine (on oath when requisite) such persons as they judged likely to afford information, and they were directed to report their proceedings under the commission from time to time.

First Report of the Commission, June 1844.

The members of this commission began to examine witnesses early in June, 1843; between that period and the 13th of June, in the following year, they followed up sedulously their inquiries, examining sixty-five witnesses (whose evidence is given); and in the end of June, 1844, the commission agreed to their first Report, which was forthwith laid before Parliament, together with the evidence, and an appendix containing valuable reports by medical men, clergymen, and others, on the sanatory state of Liverpool, Preston, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Ashton-under-Lyne, York, and Nottingham, together with tables showing the different rates of mortality among various classes in Sheffield and Huddersfield, and in drained and undrained streets in Leicester. There is also given a set of questions issued by the Commission on the sanatory state of populous towns and districts, and a table, showing the deaths of persons in 1841, and the excess of

deaths above 2 per cent. for the years 1840, 1841, and 1842. This table is calculated, and the population and result given for thirty-nine large towns or districts where a high mortality prevails. A circular letter accompanied these questions, stating that the average mortality of all England is 2·2 per cent., and in many parts of the country not 2 per cent., whereas the annual mortality appears to be 3·5 per cent. for Liverpool, 3·2 for Manchester, 3·1 for Bristol, 3 per cent. for Hull, and in many other great towns to vary from 2·6 to 2·8 per cent.*

“The Report itself states the course of proceeding; that the questions referred to were transmitted to fifty towns, where the mortality, with few exceptions, was the highest. They include the largest manufacturing towns and the principal ports, after London, and contain a population of *more than three millions* of persons. Each of these towns (it proceeds) was afterwards visited by one of the Commissioners, who examined on the spot the general condition of the town, and of the most crowded and unhealthy districts; making personal inquiries of

* The registers of mortality for these towns often take in a part of the adjacent country, thereby *diluting* the apparent mortality of the town itself. If the returns were given for the working classes *alone*, the mortality would be much more severe.

the inhabitants, and hearing such statements as were made by them, or respecting them, by medical or other officers." The Report then refers to and analyses the evidence and supplementary reports, which show the general neglect that has prevailed in almost all these populous towns, of due regulations for the health and comfort of the working classes, and the severe and extensive evils suffered by them in consequence. The want of necessary legislative provisions for this purpose is shown, the differences in local regulations, and the total absence of any superintending power to watch over and promote measures for the public health. The moral evils arising from these causes are pointed out, and the great pecuniary loss to the country from such neglect is demonstrated in the increased burdens thrown on poor rates, and other contributions of the richer classes, to support the widows, orphans, and families of those prematurely cut off by *preventable* disease.*

* Mr. Porter in speaking on this subject says, "it must be owned that our multiplied abodes of want, of wretchedness, and crime — our town populations huddled together in ill ventilated and undrained courts and cellars — our numerous workhouses filled to overflowing with the children of want — and our prisons (scarcely less numerous) overloaded with the votaries of crime, do indeed but too sadly and too strongly attest, *that all is*

The Report concludes with saying, "That the information already elicited offers the reasonable prospect that great improvements may be made to the general comfort of all, *especially the poorer, classes* of your Majesty's subjects."

Second Report of the Commission, February 1845.

The Second Report of the Commission was concluded in February 1845. It was much more comprehensive in its character than the first, having appended to it, or immediately following it, besides much additional evidence, a table showing the increase and decrease of population in various large towns and counties from 1831 to 1841^{*}; and also the reports drawn *not as it should be* as regards this most important branch of human progress." — *Progress of the Nation*, Sect. 7. p. 172. 1st edit.

* All the largest provincial towns except Bristol, and almost all the manufacturing towns, increased upwards of 20 per cent. in those 10 years, varying, however, from 70 to 20 per cent. In the metropolis the increase was 14·8 per cent., in Liverpool 39·6 per cent., Manchester 30 per cent, Birmingham 29·6.

In the counties the increase varied from 36·9 per cent. in a manufacturing county, to only 2·4 per cent., in one purely agricultural, the average of all these counties being 14·5 per cent.

up by the different Commissioners on the state of the fifty large towns, which they had personally visited. This Second Report of the Commission was signed, like the first, by all the Commissioners, and extended to 138 octavo pages.

It referred to replies from the towns and to the local reports, as showing the existence of evils varying slightly in character, and prevailing with different degrees of intensity, in the several towns visited, but generally pressing with most severity on the *poorer classes*. We believe they may be taken as correct indications of the *prevailing condition of other towns* and populous districts in this part of the united kingdom.

“It appears from the replies above alluded to, that there are *only eight* of the *fifty towns* visited, in which even a *tolerably favourable* report could be given in respect to drainage and cleansing; and as regards the supply of water, the returns, especially in the districts *inhabited by the poorer classes*, are still more *unfavourable*.”

“The general prevalence of the evils demonstrated affords direct evidence of an *equal neglect* of the *preventive and corrective remedies*, and of the *absence* of the *requisite regulations* for ensur-

ing the adoption of such measures as have been enacted."

It continues:—"Until the publication of the Reports made to the Poor Law Commissioners in 1839; upon the condition of the poorer classes in certain parts of the metropolis, followed by the Report of a Select Committee of the House of Commons in the year 1840, on the health of large towns and populous districts. The extensive injury to the public health now *proved* to arise from causes *capable of removal*, appears to have *escaped general observation*. After referring to the increased mortality arising from the neglect of any sanitary regulations the Report says—"These causes of disease are most common and virulent in the neglected districts and dwellings *of the poor*, but necessarily connected with their condition in life, but *capable of being removed* by efficient drainage, cleansing, improvements of building, ventilation, and a sufficient supply of water."

The Report then points out the moral evils arising from these causes, and states "That a *large class of crimes*, arising from intemperance and the indulgence of vicious propensities, is *much fostered* by the low state of physical comforts, &c. In addition to other causes of disease generally prevalent among the poorer classes in large towns, the almost universal scarcity of

water for domestic use has been urged on our attention, as contributing in a very great degree to increase the evils under which they labour." The great moral results consequent on an increase in the "means of cleanliness, have not yet, we fear, received the attention which their importance merits; the *domestic comforts of a poor man's abode and his own self-respect are mainly dependent on this*. We are convinced that their neglected condition is by no means the result of choice, although it may be the result of habit, produced by an unfortunate necessity." The considerations which we have adduced show that the absence of sanatory regulations in the various cities and towns in this kingdom render it necessary that measures, more decided and effectual than those now in force, should be adopted to improve and preserve the health of Her Majesty's subjects." The Report then proceeds to detail remedial measures which are stated in thirty recommendations with the reasons for each appended. This Report, the evidence given, and the Supplementary Reports on the fifty large towns inspected prove, in the clearest manner, "That the working classes have *not* improved in comfort in proportion to the middle and richer classes; and that they have *not* had afforded to them hitherto by the legislature that provident

attention which might have added to their health, happiness, and contentment.

In stating the melancholy result to which we have arrived, we have endeavoured to avoid all idle declamation on the subject, and omit any thing which might excite party or factions feelings relating to so grave a matter. Yet we cannot help coming to the conclusion, that hitherto, from whatever cause, the forms of our constitution, (perhaps from the want of a permanent administrative body, bound to watch over the interests of the poor,) however well they have worked for the higher and middle classes, have not afforded due and reasonable protection to the great mass of the working people, and that hence extensive evils have arisen, which, if neglected, will be the cause of great suffering to multitudes, of danger to the peace of the country and to the property of its inhabitants. It may be well, however, to support these views by reference to some more evidence on the subject, before we consider the cause of these evils, and humbly endeavour to suggest remedies to lessen or remove them.

Besides the Report and Evidence before referred to, bearing on the condition of the great mass of the working and poorer classes, there are various reports which have from time to

time been laid before Parliament, showing the neglected and miserable state of *particular bodies* of workmen, or of those inhabiting particular districts. Among these we will mention some which can be referred to, and cite a few statements from them.

CHAPTER VI.

REPORTS ON FACTORIES, HAND-LOOM WEAVERS, COAL AND IRON MINES.

LET us look at the accounts given of the state of three very different and numerous classes.

1st. Those employed in our great factories.

2d. Those occupied in various parts of the country in hand-loom weaving.

3d. Those working in and about our coal and iron mines.

In the Reports of Committee on Factory Children, and in the various Reports of the Factory Commissioners, (appointed to superintend the benevolent law regulating the hours for children,) we shall find ample and repeated accounts, showing the neglected state of vast numbers of those employed in factories, more

especially children, and young persons. The hardships many of them suffer, their low moral condition, from the want of education or example, are there set forth in fearful contrast to the improved state of the middle and richer classes, which we see on all sides around us. These accounts and returns extend to those employed in cotton, woollen, and silk factories; three of our most important manufactures, and giving occupation to no less than above two millions of persons — a population most rapidly increasing, and which may be said (in round numbers) to have augmented 135 per cent. since the century began, increasing, as shown by the population returns, about 30 per cent. every ten years.*

The condition of these factory labourers, especially the younger part of them, is, it is true, much improved by the laws limiting the period of infant labour, and providing some education for these neglected children. Many kind and benevolent employers have also had their attention awakened to the low social condition of many of their workmen, and have endeavoured to improve their state; yet with every allowance for these changes, there can be

* *Vide* Reports from 1831 to 1841 of Select Committees on Factories; also First, Second, and Supplementary Reports of Commissioners.

no doubt whatever that the great mass of these industrious multitudes have not advanced in comfort, happiness, or physical and moral improvement in any thing like their due proportion to that of the middle and higher classes. Neither must we forget, that the improvements which have taken place, (chiefly as respects youthful or infant labourers, have all begun but *recently*, after long years of neglect and suffering, and originated, not in any efforts of the Government, or the higher and influential classes generally, but in the persevering efforts and patient labour of a *few* benevolent persons, branded at first as impracticable enthusiasts !

Commission on Children's Employment.

In 1840 a commission was issued by Her Majesty, "for inquiring into the employment of the children of the poorer classes in mines and collieries, and the various branches of trade and manufacture, in which numbers of children

Report of H. J. Saunders on Establishment of Schools in Factory Districts, 1842.

Reports from each of the Four Factory Inspectors on Educational Provisions under the Factory Act; also, their joint Report, 1839.

Reports by Inspectors of Factories to Government, 1835 to 1845.

work together, and as to the effect of such employment, both with regard to their morals and bodily health."

The Report of this commission (in 1842) extended to various towns and districts in England, Wales, and Scotland, and open to us a melancholy account of the numerous evils, especially in the moral condition of the children, arising from former neglect of proper provisions for their *protection*, guidance, and instruction.*

It would be tedious to make many extracts from this Report, but as it bears on the condition of multitudes around us, and portrays extensive evils and sufferings which *are remediable* by benevolent regulation and wise legislation, we give a few passages with respect to coal mines. It is said, "That in some districts children remain in solitude and darkness during the whole time they are in the pit, and that many never see the light in winter for weeks together, except on Sundays. That in the districts in which females work in mines, all witnesses bear testimony to the demoralising effect of this employment.

"That in many mines the conduct of the

* *Vide* Report, 1842. Also, the Physical and Moral Condition of Children in Mines and Manufactories, illustrated by extracts from the Reports. Parker, West Strand, 1843.

adult colliers to the children is harsh and cruel, the persons in authority never interfering to prevent them.

“That in the great majority of trades and manufactures the youngest children, as well as the young persons, are paid by the workmen, and are entirely under their control, the employers exercising no sort of superintendence over them.

“That a large proportion of apprentices consist of orphans, or the children of widows, or belong to the very poorest families.

“That the term of servitude is often passed under circumstances of great hardship and ill usage.

“That in the great majority of instances, the places of work are very defective in drainage, ventilation, and the due regulation of temperature, whilst little or no regard is paid to cleanliness.

“That in many establishments for dress-making during the season, the hours of work for the young women are unlimited, they never getting more than six, often not more than four, sometimes only three, and occasionally not more than two hours, rest and sleep out of the twenty-four, and very frequently they work all night.

“That in the great majority of trades and manufactures where the children are paid by

the workmen, the work of such children is always the longest, and performed under the most oppressive circumstances.

“That little or nothing is done to afford the children or young persons the means of enjoying innocent amusement and healthful recreation in the interval of their labours.

“That where the children are the servants of the workmen, or under their control (shown to be the great majority), they are almost *always roughly, very often harshly, and sometimes cruelly used.*

“These are indeed melancholy statements in a country boasting of its noble institutions. The conclusion arrived at is, “That in many of these trades and manufactures the children have not good and sufficient food, nor warm and decent clothing, and it is a general complaint that they are prevented by want of proper clothing from going to the Sunday School, or to a place of public worship.

“That in the great majority of the children (from the causes stated), their bodily health “is seriously injured, they are for the most part stunted in growth, their aspect being pale, delicate, and sickly.”*

* Second Report, p. 198.

The moral condition of these multitudes of neglected children corresponds with the little care taken of them.

South Staffordshire Mines.

The statements of the Commissioners from almost all these populous districts and great towns and marts of labour are the same (can we read them without regret and shame?)—"that great numbers of the children employed attend no school at all, nor any place of worship, and that the neglect of the moral and religious training of the large portion of the population is *disgraceful* to a *Christian country*."

With little variation, the same or similar accounts are given with regard to almost all the coal fields throughout the kingdom.

Thus, in the West Riding, near Bradford and Leeds, near Halifax, near Oldham, throughout Lancashire, South Durham, North Durham and Northumberland, West and East Scotland, North and South Wales, and elsewhere, the same tale is told of neglect on the one hand, and *misery and ignorance and guilt* on the other.

The attendance in church or any place of worship is shown to be rare, and the want of any religious or moral principle in these neglected children, throughout all these districts, is stated from every quarter.

To repeat these sad details from the evidence would be useless: the conclusions of the Commissioners from the whole, with regard to the moral condition of the children and young persons working together in numbers in collieries, mines, or trades and manufactures, are—"That *there are few of whom a large proportion are not in a lamentably low moral condition.*"

"That this low moral condition is evinced by a general ignorance of moral duties, and sanctions, by an absence of moral and religious restraint, shown in some classes by coarseness of manners, the use of profane and indecent language; in others, by the practice of gross immorality, which is prevalent to a great extent in both sexes at very early ages."

"That the absence of restraint is the result of a general want of moral and religious training," &c. &c.

Other valuable statements of great interest are condensed in the other conclusions printed in the Report. We will only quote a few lines more, viz.

"30. That all classes of witnesses universally state that the *best educated men are the most valuable workmen, the most regular in their habits, the most trustworthy*, the most prompt to understand and execute any directions given them; that they are more accessible to reason

in any dispute or discussion respecting wages, or any other matter; that they are invariably more respectful in their behaviour, and better disposed to their superiors.

“ 35. In conclusion: That from the whole body of evidence it appears, that there are at present *in existence no means adequate to affect any material and general improvement* in the physical and moral condition of the children and young persons employed in labour.

“ This information (say the Commissioners at the end of their Report) we have now collected; and the picture which, in the faithful performance of this duty, we have been obliged to present of the *physical and moral condition of a large portion of the working classes* appears to us to require the serious consideration of your Majesty's government and of the legislature.”—*January, 1843.*

Let us now look to the accounts of the state of hand-loom weavers and their families. These perhaps comprise a greater number of the labouring population, spread through different parts of the kingdom, than any *one* other employment except agricultural labourers.

In 1838 a commission was opened to inquire into their condition and devise measures for their relief. Assistant Commissioners were employed, and a full investigation of the state

of this numerous class of the people took place.

The Report of the Commissioners was presented to parliament and printed in 1841. It gives a melancholy account of the sufferings, ignorance, and degradation of vast numbers.*

We will give but a few extracts, and state results given, referring to the Report itself for details. Speaking of one large class in the villages near Coventry, the Assistant Commissioner says,—“ In the neighbourhood of Nuneaton, Bulkington, and Folishill, the usual condition of a number of journey-hand families is that of the greatest dirt and misery; sometimes with no bedsteads, but beds of wrappers stuffed with straw, and without any linen to them.” (p. 7.)

Again: “ I did not at first credit the statements made to me of the moral debasement which prevails among the country weavers; but the overwhelming evidence on every side at length compelled me to recognise a grossness and immorality, which are the more painful to contemplate, since I cannot but apprehend that they prevail throughout the other large portions of our population similarly circumstanced.” Other parts of the Report show accounts of

* Hand-loom Weavers' Report, 1841.

numbers in distressed circumstances, yet far better off than those just described.

Yet, as a general result, “On a view of the condition of *the numerous and diversified classes comprehended under the general name of hand-loom weavers*,” the Report says, — “We have shown that, with the exception of those employed on the coarse manufactures for domestic use, *their condition is a painful one* — distressing where wages are low, and subject to frequent vicissitudes where they are high.”* And again: “The general result of our inquiries as to the condition of the hand-loom weavers and its causes, may be thus summed up: we have shown that, though there are many differences in the respective conditions of different branches of handloom weavers, yet as a body they are *in a state of distress*; and that the great cause of this distress is a disproportion between the supply of hand-loom labour and the demand for it: the demand being in many cases deficient, in some cases decreasing, and in still more irregular, whilst the supply is in many branches excessive; in almost all has a tendency to increase, and does not appear in any to have a tendency to adapt itself to the irregularities of

* Report, p. 22. Also, Report by Mr. Fletcher, on the Hand-loom Weavers of the Midland District.

the demand.”* The Report adds, — “A mere increase in the demand for the labour, unaccompanied by measures for diminishing the number of hand-loom weavers, or at least for preventing its increase, could produce merely a temporary benefit, to be followed by *distress, differing from that which now exists only by being more widely diffused.*”† After discussing other remedies suggested to amend permanently the state of this numerous and suffering class, the Commissioners say, “There remains, therefore, only *one* mode by which the number of hand-loom weavers can be proportioned to the demand for their labour; and that is, the great means to be resorted to in every decreasing or even stationary trade, namely, the *conduct of the weavers themselves.*‡ On their *activity and intelligence* in seeking other employments for themselves and their families, and in pursuing those employments when found; on the *self-denial* of the married, in placing their children in occupations less immediately productive than the loom; and of the unmarried, in abstaining from incurring the responsibility of a family where their own wages are scarcely equal to their own support: on their conduct in these respects

* Report, 1841, p. 48.

† Report, p. 49.

‡ Report, p. 121.

must mainly depend the proportion of their numbers to the demand for their labour. But activity, intelligence, self-denial, and prudence are the *results of good education*; and we lament to say, that *few of the labouring classes in the British Islands have received or are receiving a good education, or have the means of obtaining it.*"*

Having referred to Reports, showing the depressed and neglected state of large numbers of the people employed in factories, and as hand-loom weavers, we had proposed to give some extracts from Reports stating the abject condition of numbers occupied in and about mines and mineral works. This would be, however, but to repeat the same sad tale of misery as respects great bodies of sufferers that we have before seen; we will, therefore, only refer to the accounts laid before Parliament, and which our daily observation would confirm.

* Report, 1841, p. 120, 121.

CHAPTER VII.

REPORT OF CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION, 1842.

IN the First Report of the Children's Employment Commission*, from which we have already quoted, a lamentable account is given of the moral and physical condition of large numbers of children employed in and about coal, iron, and other mines. Yet it is a consolation to find such employments, as far "as regards coal mines, are capable of being rendered, as a place of work, more agreeable than many kinds of labour above ground."† Still the conclusions come to by the commissioners are of a very melancholy nature; showing children from four, five, six, seven, and eight years old, constantly employed in coal mines. "In many districts, female children working in mines at the same early age as males. Young children, called trappers, excluded from light in the mine, without companions, for long hours together, in a sort of solitary confinement of the worst order ‡;

* 1842.

† Conclusions, p. 258.

‡ Conclusions, Report, p. 255.

females taken down into the coal mines, a practice attended with grievous evils; night work, a part of the system most injurious to the physical and moral condition of the people, especially the children and young persons.” *

The report of Mr. Tancred, of the Midland Mining Commission, in 1843 †, gives a melancholy statement of the ignorance, sufferings, and low moral and physical condition of large bodies of persons employed in the great South Staffordshire coal field. It describes the evils of the truck system, the grievances of miners, which the Commissioner shows are *extensive, irritating, and very cruel and unjust*; and yet which appear to be greatly neglected by their employers, and all persons in authority.‡ It appears that the workmen are frequently cheated of their fair wages by sub-contractors, under one pretence or other, and that a discontented feeling is excited by the privations arising from usages which ought long ago to have been

* These evils are partially lessened, but the *effects* of our neglect will long remain, in a low scale of moral feeling among the people.

† Presented to Parliament in 1843.

‡ The details of the evils arising from the abuses stated, are described in a clear and forcible manner, and depict the low condition of multitudes in that large arena of unceasing labour.

abolished. The want of any adequate provision for education for the children in this populous and increasing district is shown by numerous examples; the want of any opportunities for attendance at religious worship is demonstrated. The consequences are briefly summed up by these striking sentences quoted from the Seventh Report of the Lichfield Church Extension Society:—"From Michaelmas, 1840, to Michaelmas, 1841, *there were no less than 1 in 207 of the entire population of the county of Stafford committed to the county gaol*; whereas, in the neighbouring county of Warwick, including Birmingham, the proportion of offenders to the population is 1 in 561; whilst in the mining county of Cornwall it is only 1 in 1406."*

Another commissioner (Mr. Seriven), reporting on the state of the children employed in "the potteries in North Staffordshire, (comprising 75,000 souls, chiefly of the working classes,)" uses these words:—"I almost tremble when I contemplate the fearful deficiency of knowledge existing throughout this district, and the consequences likely to result to this increased and increasing population. On an examination of the minutes of evidence from Cobridge, Burslem, &c., it will appear,

* Report, p. 143.

more than *three-fourths of the persons named can neither read nor write*. I would refer you to the evidence of their own pastors and masters, and it will appear, as one man, they acknowledge and lament their low and degraded condition.”* And yet it appears that this is not owing to want of exertion on the part of the community themselves, for the commissioner says, — “The subjoined return of the weekly sabbath and infant schools and number of places of worship, shows no efforts are spared, on the part of the wealthy classes, to afford opportunities to the younger branches of the community of acquiring moral and religious education.” †

The improvidence and recklessness of many of the workmen is described and lamented, their ignorance and improvidence set forth, and the sufferings of many of the children shown; one class are spoken of as, “by the nature of their work, pale, diminutive, and unhealthy, labouring from half-past five in the morning to six at night, and often to eight, nine, and ten, in an atmosphere from 100 to 120 degrees; all these extra hours being occasioned *nine times out of ten by the selfishness or irregularities of their unworthy task-masters*. After working

* Report to the Commissioners, by J. Seriven, Esq., Burslem, 1841, c. 10.

† Report, c. 8.

near a stove so heated as to raise the temperature to 130 degrees, I have seen the boys running on errands, or to their dinners, without stockings, shoes, or jackets, with the perspiration on their foreheads, after labouring like little slaves, and with the mercury 20 degrees below freezing." (p. 7. e. 6.) — " Yet the principal manufacturers are highly spoken of as sympathising with those in distress, contributing, as much as possible, to their happiness." (e. 2.)

We have now shown, from evidence of undoubted authority, the neglected and degraded condition of vast multitudes of our working classes in various employments, in different districts, spread throughout the length and breadth of the realm; and we think, to any candid inquirer and any humane and considerate man, we have made out clearly—that our working population not only have *not* improved in position in proportion to other classes, but that *very many of them* are worse off than in former years.

We ought not then to wonder if discontent, misery, and crime, the natural consequences of suffering and ignorance, have increased among us.

Do not let us cast the blame on demagogues who deceive the people, nor on the wretched who give way to temptations; but *on ourselves*,

who ought, long since, to have looked into these things, and devised and carried out gradual but extensive remedies.

Before, however, we cast a rapid glance over the consequences and the just penalties of our own neglect, and that of our government, in the threats of discontent and disturbance, and the fearful cost of crime, let us look for a moment at the state of a body of labourers lately called into notice and permanent action by a modern discovery, greatly adding to the wealth and convenience of all classes.

The state of the railway labourers was brought forward in an able work by Mr. Chadwick, to whose admirable efforts in the cause of humanity we have already alluded; in consequence, in April 1846, a Committee of the House of Commons, was appointed to inquire into the condition of railway labourers. Their report states*,
“ That the railway system, in mere construction, gives employment to not much less than 200,000 of the effective population of the country.† That your Committee cannot but conclude, on the evidence received from various parts of the country, that the circumstances under which

* Report on Railway Labourers, 28th July, 1846.

† If half of these men are married, and have each, on an average, three children, the whole number of persons directly dependent on this occupation will be 600,000.

their labour is carried on are too generally of a deteriorating kind; they are crowded into unwholesome dwellings, whilst scarcely any provision is made for their *comfort and decency* of living; they are released from the useful influence of domestic ties, they are hard-worked, they are exposed to great risk of life and limb, they are too often hardly treated, and many inducements are offered to them to be thoughtless, thriftless, and improvident."

The report then goes on to state the numerous evils which arise from the present neglect of all provisions for the benefit of these poor men, and suggests several regulations for their advantage.

We thus see that this class, who may be denominated the youngest sons of labour, and have been called as it were into existence but recently, are (as regards legislative protection and guidance enforced by a paternal and provident government) as destitute and neglected as the numbers, otherwise employed, whose situation has before been described and lamented.*

* As connected with the health and welfare of the working classes, we would refer to Mr. Chadwick's able work on the evils arising from burying grounds in the midst of towns, to the *excessive charges* on the poorer people for interments, and other mischiefs from these causes.

CHAPTER VIII.

WANT OF EDUCATION.

THOUGH we have already had demonstrated to us in various reports the neglected and depressed condition of vast multitudes of the working classes, and their children; and must thence infer that any adequate and efficient education for the latter is wanting; yet it may be well to add, shortly, some direct testimony to this important point. In all the reports which have been quoted, especially the different reports of the Commissioners on the Health of Towns, and the reports of the Commission on Children's Employment, this want of effectual useful education, or the means of obtaining it, is shown. Dr. Lyon Playfair, in his description of the schools in the great towns of Lancashire, states in the strongest terms the evils arising from this neglect; more especially as regards the defective structural arrangement of the schools, and their want of ventilation.* The

* Report on the Large Towns of Lancashire, by Dr. L. Playfair, 1845. — In the Reports of various Inspectors of Schools to the Committee of Council from 1840 to the present time, we find constant proof of the deficiency of education among the working classes throughout the country and the towns. — See also the Reports and the Manchester and Birmingham Statistical Societies, as to

same kind of testimony will be found, as regards the other great towns visited and examined, in the reports of the other Commissioners.

In 1838, the last Committee of the House of Commons, "on Education of the Children of the Poorer Classes in large Towns," was appointed and reported. They heard much evidence on the subject, and their Report was printed in the middle of July, 1838. This Report states, "that in this matter, important as it is to the welfare of all classes, there seem to exist no sources of information in any department of government."*

The conclusion of the Committee is stated, "That it was desirable to provide efficient daily school education in all populous towns for *one eighth of the population.*"

The Report goes on to give the calculations and evidence laid before them; and after all due allowances, the conclusion they arrive at is, "That in one populous parish of the east of London, less than one in twenty have education, instead of one in eight," and that they have ample grounds for stating that throughout this vast metropolis, the means of useful daily instruction are lamentably deficient. A table is given with the calculation for seven London parishes with a population of 178,000, in which the want of education in Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Salford, and Bury.

* This defect is now partially remedied.

the average of daily tolerable instruction is only *one in twenty-seven* of the population.

The Committee say, "That in the large manufacturing and sea-port towns, where the population has rapidly increased within the present century, they refer for particulars to the evidence taken before them, which appears to bear out the following results:

"1st. — That the *kind* of education given to the children of the working classes is lamentably deficient.

"2nd. — That it extends (bad as it is) to but a small proportion of those who ought to receive it.

"3rd. — That without some strenuous and persevering efforts be made on the part of government, the *greatest evils* to all classes may follow from this neglect."*

A table is then given of the state of education in sixteen of the largest provincial towns, with a population of about one million two hundred thousand persons. It is stated as the

* By returns to Parliament it appears that 85 per cent. of the criminals committed could not read and write, or could only read or write imperfectly. "In the group of the greatest manufacturing districts, with *least* education, the excess of crime *over* the average of the country is 24·8 per cent.," or nearly one-fourth. — *Neison, Statistics of Crime*.

"In the same kind of districts, with better education, crime is 7 per cent. *below* the average."—*Idem*, 1847.

general result, that only *one in twenty-four* receive an education likely to be useful.

In Leeds, only - 1 in 41,

In Birmingham, - 1 in 38,

In Manchester, - 1 in 35*,

instead of one in eight, as is requisite.

Since the period of this Report some addition has been made to the government grant for education, and some attention has been paid to the subject, but no systematic or extensive improvement has been effected; and when we bear in mind the rapid increase in population among the poorer classes in these crowded communities, and learn from the other Reports quoted their low physical and moral state, we are obliged to arrive (as regards these populous districts) at the sad conclusion, stated so forcibly in the words of the Report on Children's Employment†, and which can hardly be read without grief and shame.—“That few of *these* labouring classes in the British Islands have received or are receiving a good education, or have the means of obtaining it.”‡

* A calculation is given in the evidence, with the facts on which it rests, showing that the very best education for all the children in want of it might be afforded for a *less sum* than is now paid by half the number for a very bad education.—See Dr. Kay's Evidence.

† Report, 1841.

‡ By the returns of Mr. Horner as to the operation of the education clauses of the Factory Acts, with respect

Mr. Porter, in lamenting the great increase of crime among our juvenile population, says, "this evil never should or could have arisen, but for the neglect of the Legislature to furnish means for imparting to all, that degree of moral training which it is the duty of the state to provide for the well-ordering of the community."*

Want of Church Room for the Working Classes.

Great neglect has hitherto been shown in affording to working classes in our populous districts, the means of attaining religious instruction or attending public worship. Though considerable exertions have lately been made on this point, yet how destitute in this respect are multitudes of the poor, who are yet crowded

to children under fourteen, it appeared, as regards boys, 49 per cent. could not read, 67 per cent. could not write their names. Of girls, 57 per cent. could not read, 88 per cent. could not write their names. The same kind of statement will be found throughout the Reports of the Prison Inspectors; and constant proofs of the want of an improved system of education, in the interesting Reports of the Inspectors of Schools to the Committee of Council.

* Progress of the Nation, sect. vii. p. 200. Second edition. "It is found in *every instance* that an increase of crime is associated with a low state of education, but where a better state of education prevails there is *always* found a less amount of crime." — Neison, *Statistics of Crime*, 1847.

together in large masses, and exposed to evil temptations and examples !

In London and all our great towns, rapidly increased in population, there is not church accommodation for a quarter of the numbers of *the humble classes* who require it. They who *cannot pay for places* want them most. There are multitudes, borne down with affliction, who stand as it were in darkness and the shadow of death, who never are enabled to enter a church, or “rejoice when a Sabbath appears.”

In Laneashire there are thirty-eight districts, containing 816,000 persons, with church room only for one-eighth. In the diocese of York, twenty districts containing 420,000, and church room for only one-ninth; and so in other places.

What is the consequence of this neglect ? — In three Laneashire towns, filled with the working classes *, of 12,000 heads of families and lodgers, upwards of 4300 *made no religious profession at all*. In the parishes of St. John and St. Margaret, Westminster, out of 4780 heads of families of the working classes, whose opinions were ascertained, 1180, or nearly *one-fourth*, professed *not to belong to any religious denomination*. †

* State of the Working Classes in a Manufacturing District, 1838. Ridgway.

† Statistics of Westminster. Transactions of London Statistical Society.

CHAPTER IX.

EFFECTS OF NEGLECT — DISCONTENT, DISEASE,
MORTALITY.

WE have seen in Reports of Government Commissioners, Parliamentary Commissions, and other evidence of undoubted credit, the neglected condition of vast bodies of the people, and that this state of things has been continuing for many years, whilst the population and wealth of the country have been rapidly increasing, and whilst all the enjoyments and comforts of life have greatly increased to the richer and middle classes. Let us now take a rapid survey of the effects hence produced in three particulars, each of which is of great consequence to the community.

1st. — In discontent.

2nd. — In disease and suffering.

3rd. — In crime.

The result of the whole being a vast increase of cost to the country. All of these, we believe, may in great measure be clearly traced to the neglected physical and moral condition of the humbler classes, as clearly as crops to the seeds sown and the culture given.

In the course of many visits to the crowded districts, inhabited by the poorer classes in different portions of London, in many of our great cities and populous places, we have found *Discontent* — a prevalent discontent at their neglected state; often, a feeling of irritation against their employers, or of suspicion of the higher classes, which, combined with their ignorance, made them the ready dupes of any designing and crafty person, desirous of sowing dissatisfaction among them. In spite of that strong adhesion to *things as they are*, which seems inherent in the human mind, especially (and perhaps fortunately) among the uneducated and unreflecting, we do not think that among the masses alluded to (from whom we would except *skilled* workmen and those of superior intelligence) there is a strong, if any, attachment to the institutions of the country, the government under which they live, or, generally, towards the higher classes, whom they often regard as their oppressors, and look upon with suspicion; yet, when well treated, we have found them *responsive to kindness* and *full of gratitude and good feeling*, more especially where benefit is *done to their children*.

The spirit of discontent we have spoken of — the source of *great suffering and evil* — pervades, we believe (more or less), the great mass of

those whose condition we have described; and if these accounts *are* true (and who can dispute them?), we ought not to be surprised at it. These discontents take various forms; sometimes only showing themselves in dogged manners, and surly tones, or general coarseness of demeanour; sometimes, in abusive language, where fear does not repress it; sometimes, in the various forms of strikes for wages, and combinations against employers; and occasionally, in political combinations and movements, by which they are taught to hope to improve their condition. Sometimes this spirit breaks out in riots, and public disturbances; as recently in Bristol, Birmingham, and South Wales; much more frequently it remains constantly acting, but concealed from observation, and *tainting with discomfort the great under-current of life* in this teeming country.

A few instances can only be noted from the period past, indicative of the spirit described:—

In 1812, disturbances by discontented workmen, calling themselves Luddites, prevailed in parts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, and Nottinghamshire. They burned several factories, plundered houses, and caused great alarm. In 1815, disputes between employers and colliers on the Tyne and Wear were carried on with great virulence and violence. Discon-

tents connected with changes in machinery, fluctuation in wages and employment have occurred from time to time in most of our manufacturing and populous districts: political objects have sometimes been connected with them, and often one cause of excitement leads to another.

After the peace, several years of distress among manufacturers, increased by the bad harvest of 1816, produced a ferment, which took a political course. Then occurred the unfortunate affray and loss of life at Manchester. In 1821, some misguided men broke out into open resistance to the laws in Derbyshire; several were executed for high treason. From 1816 to 1829 there were strikes in almost every branch of the less skilled trades of a very formidable description. Among the most remarkable and injurious in their effects, were those in Gloucestershire and at Kidderminster in 1828 and 1829.* In 1827 there was an active meeting of trades; in 1828, a general meeting of delegates in the Isle of Man; in 1830, trade agitation for a time merged in political views and discussions about the Reform Bill. After that measure, many fell back to Trades Unions, and large strikes were attempted, as the tailors

* Previously there were many benefit clubs; since then they have been dissolved. — W. A. Miles's Hand-loom Weavers' Report, p. 533.

in London, and the silkmen in Derby; then took place a vast procession of 40,000 workmen to Whitehall.

Unable to accomplish the improvement in their condition they expected by Trades Unions, many again turned to political views, and in 1836 the Working Trades Association was set on foot, to discuss the principles of a proposed Charter. In 1838, this Charter assumed a definite form, and became a rallying point for those discontented with their condition. This national petition (as it was called) was carried to Scotland and the North, very numerous signed, and was in 1839 presented to the House of Commons.

In the same year took place in London the Convention, as it was called, of Delegates from many populous districts, and resolutions were passed, tending to the excitement of the working classes. Since then there have been disturbances among the manufacturers in Montgomeryshire, discontents in Wiltshire, outrages and a revolt in South Wales, a serious outbreak attempted at Sheffield, and elsewhere symptoms of great discontent.

We can all recollect the disturbances in Bristol, and the pillage and fire of houses at Birmingham and the Staffordshire Potteries. The Rebecca riots in South Wales, and the

Commission issued in consequence, are yet fresh in our memories. We must not forget the incendiary fires which from time to time afflicted various of the southern counties of England but a short time ago, nor the rural insurrection and outbreak in some of those counties, requiring a special commission for trial of the offenders.

What is the practical lesson we should draw from these symptoms, showing themselves from year to year? It is, *that there is something wrong in the social state of many of these persons*; they desire changes because they believe such changes will improve their condition. We have seen that the condition of many of them is greatly susceptible of improvement.

We believe the destruction of machinery, attempts at intimidation of employers, and great political changes advocated by many of these misguided men, can only end in suffering and sorrow; but we do not the less pity those who, smarting under fancied oppression, *many real grievancees, and much neglect*, rush into courses injurious to themselves, and often dangerous to the country. Nay, but let us try to help them, to concede to them that consideration their *real claims* deserve, and thus safely and securely win them to the side

of order—"by only doing our duty towards them."

Disease and Mortality.—We now propose to look very briefly at the increase of *disease* and suffering caused by the neglected state of vast numbers of the working classes.

As many may be incredulous as to the amount of disease, and therefore suffering, in any spot, and may assert the healthiness of one district rather than another, "it is of great advantage to have a *standard* of authority as to the health of any place which shall be above suspicion, to which we can refer." Such we are fortunate enough to possess in the returns of mortality made annually by the different local officers, called registrars, to the registrar general in London. Abstracts of these forms are printed in a tabular form for reference, and are of the greatest use for comparing the state of public health in different towns and districts. By these returns we are enabled to see what is the number of deaths annually in proportion to the population in any of our great towns. The number of the people being taken every ten years, and the last return being in 1841, we can by the published table* compare the

* Although, as compared with former years, there is on the *whole* population a considerable diminution in the rate of mortality, yet if we calculated only the working

number of deaths in the year with the population of that period: the table cited gives us this proportion for all our principal cities, and another for each of the different parishes in the metropolis. By these returns it appears that the greatest difference exists on this point, so important as affording (after reasonable allowance for disturbing causes) a clear index of the comparative mortality, and therefore public health, in different towns and districts.

Thus it appears that the average mortality of all England is but 2·2 per cent, and in many parts of the country, the mortality is not 2 per cent. in the population. In Halifax and Oxford it is 2·1 per cent., whilst in

Wolverhampton	-	-	-	2·8 per cent.
Exeter	-	-	-	2·7
Nottingham	-	-	-	2·8
Leicester	-	-	-	3·
Bristol	-	-	-	3·1
Liverpool*	-	-	-	3·5

That is, in Halifax and Oxford rather more or poorer classes in many of our large towns, this would not be the case. Neither is *long* life, in the neglected and miserable condition depicted in the Reports of the Health of Towns' Commissioners, to be considered a blessing.

* It is capable of being rendered as healthy as any town, says an intelligent witness.—*Health of Towns Report*, p. 271.

than four persons die in every *two* years out of one hundred ; and in Liverpool, in the same time and out of the same number, seven die, the deaths being thus seven to four. So, in some neglected eastern London parishes the deaths are nearly double those of others to the west better attended to.*

We may consider the disease, misery, suffering, and sorrow, in nearly the same proportions. These proportions hold good for a whole parish; but if we were to compare the number of deaths, and consequent disease and suffering, in *one* neglected street, court, or alley, with a like population better situated, we should find the case much worse, and instead of the deaths being annually one in twenty-five, they would often amount to a death annually in twenty or sixteen; and that, instead of two to one, the deaths would be *three to one* compared with those of the same number in a more favoured situation. Every where we shall find around us a mass of suffering, within our power to di-

* The deaths during one year, in England and Wales, by epidemic and contagious diseases, including fever, typhus, &c., the great *proportion of which are preventable*, amount to above 56,000, which is the same as if the whole county of Westmoreland or Huntingdon were depopulated annually. — *Chadwick's General Report on Sanatory Condition*, p. 3.

minish, and the effort will eventually be a measure of economy as well as humanity. *

We shall thus have it often proved to us, by facts resting on returns of undoubted credit, that the deaths in these neglected places are nearly three times as great as in others, and often twice as great as they should be were due caution and necessary improvements carried out. The deduction is also clear, "that the disease, mendicancy, increase of poor-rates, and of expense for medicine and support to widows and orphans, to those disabled from labour, supporting others, is *double* what it ought or might be if such improvements were effected. There will be twice as many deaths, twice as many funerals, double the suffering, double the grief of parting friends, double the sorrow of sad survivors. There will be twice as many widows, and twice as many orphans. In the one case, where the mortality is low, death arrives gradually, in almost its natural course, when the years are told out, and the task of life is nearly over: in the other, it suddenly seizes its victims in their opening youth, in the

* "The annual slaughter in England and Wales from *preventable causes of typhus* fever, which attacks persons in the vigour of life, appears to be *double* the amount of what was suffered by the allied armies at the battle of Waterloo." — *Chadwick, Report on Sanatory Condition.*

strength of their days, or wastes them down to nothingness by varied forms of pestilence—the offspring of neglect.* What are the consequences of this difference? We shall find the rate of mortality one great criterion of comfort, therefore of contentment, of good conduct, of moral habits, of intelligence, docility, usefulness, and value.” In the one case we shall find a population having little to complain of, ready to attend to advice, having had time to learn and to think, having experience from lengthened life, and being valuable subjects, docile and industrious, possessing that chief safeguard against tumults and disorders, “*the hope of improving their condition* :” in the other will be found a body consisting in great measure of the young who cannot repay their support; a large proportion of the rest will be inexperienced, untaught, untried, having had no time to learn or to think. Their maxim will be the heathen maxim of old, “Eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” Forced by their necessities to labour, experience and docility will be wanting; they will not husband their wages, but seek for excitement in intemperance or low sensual indulgences; their consumption of spirits will be

* Report on Birmingham and other Towns, p. 37. 1845.
—Supplement to Second Report of Health of Towns Commission, 1845.

ten times that of the happier class; illieit connections will be formed; early, ill-assorted marriages will take place, without any chance of a provision for offspring; thence will arise multitudes of sickly and neglected children, pressing into the places of those early victims just departed, and to be cut off by the same melancholy process: and thus the scene revolves. "This class will eagerly join in riots and disturbances, partly for the sake of excitement, and because they have *not* that best security for good conduct—the hope of improving their condition. To one or other of these classes, or to some gradations between them, the great mass of our labouring people, 'in populous cities pent,' belong. From the concurrent testimony of all thinking persons, it is now known that the circumstances which chiefly influence, in these points, 'their weal or woe,' are within reach of well-devised legislation, duly enforced by benevolent superintendence."

CHAPTER X.

INCREASE OF CRIMINALS — CONSUMPTION OF SPIRITS.

HAVING seen the amount of disease and suffering, and the rate of mortality, arising in great measure from the neglected physieal and moral condition of the working classes, let us now view the fearful progress of crime, fostered and stimulated by the same causes.*

The numbers of criminals committed in England and Wales, in 1805, were 4600; 1815, 7800; 1821, 16,500; 1831, 19,600; 1841, 27,740; 1842, 31,300; 1843, 29,501†; 1844, 25,500; 1845, 24,300.‡

We shall find the increase of criminals has

* It will be found, says Mr. Porter, that in England and Wales, the number of persons committed for trial is now five times as great as it was at the begining of the century. — Seet. 7. p. 172.

† Returns to Home Office. "In 1837, above 20,000 were tried for offencees, to obtain money chiefly by lareeny, or iu modes which import *habitual depredation*." — *Constabulary Force Report*, p. 18.

‡ This slight improvement was owing to improved employment and food, and a better constabulary force.

been above *six-fold*, whilst the population has increased 60 *per cent.* in about forty years; or, in other words, the criminal commitments have augmented *ten times* as fast as the people.

In the able Report of the Constabulary Commissioners, lately presented to the House of Commons, it appears the number of depredators and suspected persons at that time within the district of the

Metropolitan police,	was 17,000, or 1 in 89	
Hull	-	937, or 1 in 64
Liverpool	-	4700, or 1 in 45
Bristol	-	3481, or 1 in 31
Newcastle-on-Tyne		2114, or 1 in 27

}

The Report continues, "that the number of commitments to our jails may be stated in round numbers, as 100,000 annually, consisting of from 12,000 to 20,000 persons coming again and again before the courts of justice;" that the average length of the career of a London thief was about six years, and that of a depredator in the country twice as long, *living all the time on the public.*

* See the neglected and abject condition of large numbers of the working classes in these four great towns, as detailed respectively by the Commissioners on the Health of Towns in their several local Reports.—*Appendix to First and Second Reports of the Commission, October, 1845.*

As an accompaniment to the augmentation of criminals, has been the additional consumption of ardent spirits, alternately a cause and effect of vice and wretchedness."* The consumption in Great Britain, in 1817, was 9,200,000 gallons; in 1827, 18,200,000, gallons; in 1837, 29,200,000 gallons. †

Thus we see the quantity of spirits used, *trebled* in twenty years, from 1817 to 1837, whilst the population increased about *one third*. It was calculated, by an accurate authority, that ten years before, every person above twelve years of age consumed, on an average, one gallon of spirits per annum; but then, *one gallon and a half*. ‡

Mr. Porter, in his excellent work on the Progress of the Nation §, gives some able calculations and clear tables showing the fearful increase of crime; but his statements show that that increase is (in twenty agricultural counties

* Report on Sanatory State of Labouring Classes, p. 27.

† In 1839, the consumption was 29,214,000 gallons, slightly diminished in 1845 to 26,672,477 gallons: most of this diminution, slight as it is, is to be traced to the efforts of one man in the Temperance movement in Ireland. — *Vide* Return of spirits, &c., House of Common, 20th January, 1847.

‡ Colonel Sykes, Transactions of Statistical Society of London, 1847.

§ Sect. 7. p. 196. and 199.

from 1806 to 1841, with an increase of population of 55 per cent.) nearly the same as in twenty more manufacturing counties, with an increase of 92 per cent. These tables show such constant and rapid additions to the ranks of *juvenile offenders*, as is calculated to awaken the deepest interest.

We have now seen described, on evidence of undoubted veracity, the moral and physical condition of multitudes of the working classes and their children; we have seen the neglected state of their dwellings, and the afflicting evils many of them suffer from causes which are, we are assured, *preventable*, by proper social regulation for their benefit. We have seen the destitute and degraded condition of vast numbers of their children, and their want of extensive and effectual education, to shield them from evil, and lead them to good.

The effect of this state of things we have seen exemplified—

1st. — In discontents and disturbances constantly showing themselves in one form or other.

2nd. — In increased mortality, numerous deaths, wide-spread diseases, great sufferings and misery among vast numbers.

3rd. — In an alarming augmentation of criminals, far out-running their former proportion.

to the population, and an immense additional consumption of spirits among our people.

CHAPTER XI.

COST TO THE COUNTRY OF CRIME, DISEASE, AND IGNORANCE.

WE will now view, briefly, the expense and annual cost and waste to the country of these effects, from causes principally within our own power to remove.

The uniform opinion of all the most intelligent witnesses shows that the habitual use of ardent spirits is the resource of the degraded, the dissolute, the ignorant, and the miserable. The annual consumption of spirits in Great Britain and Ireland is now upwards of thirty millions of gallons.* Of this vast quantity suppose five millions of gallons to be used by the richer and middle classes, and for medical purposes, we have then twenty-five millions of gallons, costing

* In 1838; reduced, it is true, to about 26,500,000 gallons in 1845; but this only from the diminution in Ireland, resting on temporary causes.

at retail prices which they pay*, an annual sum of not less than twelve millions and a half sterling to the great body of the poorer class. “Add to this the sum expended by them in intoxication with malt liquors (allowing besides liberally for comfort and reasonable conviviality), which cannot be less than two millions and a half sterling.† We have then a sum of fifteen millions per annum, the different direction of which, consequent on the improved intelligence and situation of these parties, would alone be a vast saving to the country, and work the greatest benefit. It would be a complete shifting of this mighty power from the side of evil to that of good; it would be as if fifteen millions, before expended for the destruction of the bodies and souls of men, were turned to their comfort and preservation.‡ Who can calculate the cost, and loss of time and health, arising from this degrading vice, alternately the offspring and the source of misery, the constant cause of discontent and disease. We shall find our infirmaries,

* The retail cost, in small quantities, will be about 10s. per gallon on the *average* for the *whole kingdom*.

† The average annual consumption of malt in the united kingdom for three years, 1843, 1844, and 1845, is about thirty-six millions of bushels; the cost, at 6s. 8d. per bushel, would be twelve millions, besides hops, vessels, labour, &c., making at least fourteen millions.

‡ State of Towns, p. 58.

our hospitals, our poorhouses crowded with its victims.”*

... We have shown by a short calculation the vast sum annually abstracted from the earnings of the poorer classes, owing to causes we believe chiefly, if not entirely, remediable by enlightened legislative provisions and facilities, duly carried out and followed up by the generous and persevering efforts of the higher and middle classes. We hope hereafter to show that such efforts, besides being a noble Christian duty, due from those who owe so much, would be remunerative to the parties themselves, highly advantageous to their common country, and a source of interesting and happy employment to thousands in want of due occupation, or wasting their time and powers, in days and years of listlessness, or strenuous idleness†, which they can hereafter only review with regret and dismay.

This annual cost to the country we have estimated at fifteen millions sterling. Let us turn to other sources of cost arising from the same *removable* causes.

* The sum expended for the relief of the poor in 1845 exceeded five millions sterling in England and Wales only.

† In the *constant* occupations of sporting, travelling, or exchanging visits; or other diligent methods for destroying tedious time, in *objectless* pursuits.

The sum annually paid for the relief of the poor in England and Wales, raised by rate, amounts to above five millions.

Can any one, acquainted with the working of the poor law, and cognisant of the general character of paupers, and the causes which lead to pauperism, doubt that one half of this vast sum might be saved by judicious measures *preventive* of the evils described. Let us bear in mind, "that of the 43,000 cases of widowhood, and 112,000 cases of destitute orphanage relieved from the poor rates in England and Wales alone, it appears that the greatest proportion of the deaths of heads of families occurred from the above described and other removable causes *; that their ages were under 45 years, that is, 13 years below the natural probabilities of life, &c.; that these adverse circumstances tend to produce an adult population, short-lived, improvident, reckless, and intemperate." Let us remember the vast number annually cut off by preventable cases of typhus fever, which attacks persons in the vigour of life. †

If to those numbers reduced to pauperism by

* General Report on the Sanatory Condition of the Labouring Classes in 1842, p. 309. — Conclusion.

† Dr. S. Smith's Evidence, Health of Towns Commission, Oct. 1844.

preventable causes, affecting their health and strength and physical condition, let us add the innumerable victims of intemperance, improvidence, ignorance, and idleness, who fell for want of education, instruction, and example, we shall then find that at least half the cost of pauperism might be saved. Thus would a pecuniary advantage, equal to two and a half millions, accrue.* But we have another vast fund to go to; another immense saving to be effected by enlightened measures of improvement in the social condition of the people.

What is the cost of crime to the country?—crime, the offspring of neglect and ignorance, which is one of the most costly commodities in the world. The report of the Constabulary Commission (p. 4.) states, that the cost of 4700 vicious characters of both sexes residing in

* To this should be added the sum now expended in infirmaries, hospitals, and various other charities public and private, for the relief of illness and indigence arising from the causes described; which cannot be estimated for England at less than five millions sterling, being the same amount as the poor rate, of which, we think, half might be saved by preventive measures. The income of the endowed charities of the metropolis alone (excluding education charities, and those supported by *subscriptions* and *donations*) exceed £250,000 per annum.

Liverpool alone was (independent of the expense of police) 700,000*l.* per annum.*

If we follow up this calculation to the other great towns and populous districts throughout the country, whose neglected state we have seen, we shall find the annual *cost* of vice and crime not less than ten millions per annum.

Vast as is this sum, we believe it to be much underrated. Let us remember the relative proportion of the population and wealth of Liverpool to the metropolis (with near 17,000 such persons) and other large towns and populous districts of the kingdom. Also this calculation was made in 1836, when the number of commitments was scarcely 20,000, whereas since that time it has reached to a much larger amount.† On the whole we feel assured the cost of crime is above ten millions sterling, and at least half that amount (five millions) arises from preventable causes; and that this vast saving would eventually take place, if such improvements be carried out in the social condition of the working classes.

We have hitherto chiefly considered the in-

* Report 1839, p. 18. "The Sub-Committee, who examined the details of this Report, state that, immense as this sum is, it is not exaggerated, but much understated;" — so also the Statistical Society of Liverpool.

† 1843, 29,500; 1844, 25,500.

direct cost of crime; but the direct expenditure for the purpose of repressing criminals is very great, and we have seen that they continue to increase in spite of all our efforts. Let us then “change our battery, and instead of working by force and strong hand on the full grown and hardened criminal, let us betake ourselves to sap, by gentle but more effectual methods, the foundations of the evil.”

The annual direct outlay for repressing crime in England alone is upwards of a million and a half sterling.* If we make a short summary of these enormous expenses, arising from the causes described, we shall find they amount annually to a sum exceeding the interest of the whole national debt—a prize for exertion, a reward for improvements, a direct and munificent incentive to us to do our duty, and to improve, by every means in our power, the phy-

* Estimated costs of constabulary force	-	£450,000
“ for the metropolis	-	260,000
“ for London	-	40,000
		<hr/>
		750,000

Paid from county rates for prosecutions, gaols, and other matters connected with crime	352,000
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From the consolidated fund, transports, penitentiaries, convicts, &c.	-	-	-	460,000
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1,562,000

sical and moral condition of the working classes of these realms.

A summary of these sources of cost to be saved will be—

	Millions sterling.
Annual outlay in spirits, and intoxication by malt liquor	- 15
In poor rate (half)	- - $2\frac{1}{2}$
In crime (two-thirds)	- - $7\frac{1}{2}$
Direct cost of police (two-thirds)	1
Hospitals, infirmaries, and other endowed and voluntary charities, to relieve illness and indigence (one-half)	- - $2\frac{1}{2}$
	<hr/>
Annually	$28\frac{1}{2}$
	<hr/>

Vast as this sum is, we believe it is below the truth. Let us remember the cost of criminals to the country is only calculated for England. The poor-rates and cost of the poor is only for England. The expenditure for police and the punishment and prevention of crime is only for England. All ought to be largely added to for Ireland and Scotland.

Nothing is set down for the cost to almost every family of some one of its members or relatives, wholly or partially cast upon it for support (owing to some of the removable

causes described), by so much lessening the income of such family, and thereby the aggregate wealth of the country.

We have then a sum annually equalling the interest of the whole national debt, to be saved by enlightened and persevering measures to remove suffering, prevent disease, educate ignorance, and lead from crime. Such is the vast premium offered for no painful and difficult sacrifice, but for the first Christian duty, "doing to others as we would be done by."

It has been stated that in this most opulent and powerful country of the world, the disposable capital of the kingdom increases at the rate of a million sterling per week, or fifty-two millions per annum. An additional sum, more than equal to half this immense fund, may be saved to our people, may be directed to their lasting welfare, by steadily improving the condition of multitudes now ignorant, neglected, and depressed.*

* No one can suppose we are sanguine enough to anticipate such an immense pecuniary benefit in the course of a very few years ; but gradually and securely we believe it would follow energetic and enlightened measures for social improvement.

CHAPTER XII.

INCREASED SECURITY, COMFORT, AND HAPPINESS.

HITHERTO we have been only calculating the *pecuniary* saving, from measures calculated to do justice to the working classes, and permanently to improve their condition. But here we have brought to mind the words of the lamented Mr. Sydney Smith.* “There *are* principles (I am quite serious in what I say) above cash, superior to cotton, higher than currency—principles without which it is better to die than live, which every servant of God, over every sea and in all lands, should cherish.” Such principles would teach us that independent of all calculations of profit, and if it would be a pecuniary loss, instead of a great and increasing gain. It is the first duty of every Government to protect the most numerous and defenseless portion of its subjects from such extensive and grievous evils, as are proved to exist among us.

Besides, however, enlightened justice and provident mercy, being the *cheapest* measures

* His Letter on American Debts, p. 18.

which a government can have recourse to, saving (even on the beggarly balance of pounds and pence) millions, which are lost for ever by a niggardly, ignorant and short-sighted economy, there are other and inestimable advantages to be counted on the side of such improvements.

1st. — We should have far greater security for life and property — fewer disturbances and riots, less apprehension of political outbreaks, or of trade strikes and combinations, which have, heretofore, continually occurred from time to time.

2nd. — We should have more intelligent, contented, docile, and industrious workmen, labourers and servants — more attached to their employers and masters, bound by ties of gratitude to the institutions of our common country!

3rd. — We should greatly increase our own comfort and happiness; we (the richer classes) should not have to come in contact almost constantly with those whose minds, feelings and manners, have been hardened and rendered coarse or callous by neglect, disease, ignorance and suffering; we should not have to witness in our populous cities, and many of our remote rural districts, such scenes of sorrow, as now exist; and above all we could not upbraid ourselves with those extensive evils, arising from our own indolence and indifference.

4th. — We should, by well-considered and energetic measures, for removing or lessening the extensive evils described, create and add to the sources of happiness for this most numerous class of the community. Such a motive will not be lightly put aside in a country where we have ourselves so much to be grateful for, and where mutual Christian obligations are, or appear to be, respected.

Let us bear in mind, that the main sources of happiness for the working classes (perhaps of all classes) ought to consist in the social affections; in the kind feelings that ought to exist between husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, relatives, friends, or neighbours. These true and lasting sources of happiness are placed by Nature equally within reach of the poor as of the rich, unless they are destroyed or tainted by the evils described. How harsh and hard, how cruel and unjust it is then, by our neglect or the neglect of our government, to deprive the humbler classes of these purest sources of happiness which *alone they can call their own!*

Let no one for a moment suppose that the rude labourer or mechanic has not feeling susceptible of these social affections, and the lasting pleasures which spring from them. The uniform experience of all those acquainted with

these humble persons will testify in their favour. In many cases, even now, their attachment to their children, their parents, and their conduct as husbands and wives is exemplary, under all disadvantages. But how is it possible for the domestic virtues or the social affections to flourish, scarcely to exist, amidst the extensive moral and physical evils which have been shown to weigh down the spirits and destroy the health and strength of vast multitudes of our working people?

We have again and again visited many of those neglected and wretched places described in the authorities quoted, and have ourselves watched and witnessed the *slow but sure and sad process going on*, by which hearts are hardened, minds corrupted, the health of the soul and body destroyed, and all by circumstances over which the poor sufferers have little or no control, but which are preventable or removable if the legislature and the richer classes do their duty.

Many will be ready to denounce such views as the dreams of some enthusiast: numbers will be found to echo the cry, and to deny the possibility of any such changes, but are they right? Can the facts be denied we have brought forward? Are not the fifty great towns examined in the neglected state described? Has not a

great change taken place within the last half century in the employments and situations of the working classes, calling for corresponding changes in social regulations for their benefit? We do not for an instant contend that the vast advantages we promise and predict from large and liberal measures of improvement can take place *suddenly*, or that the neglect of half a century can be remedied by the brief efforts of a few years; but we, nevertheless, feel confident in the happy result of enlightened perseverance, and that there is no other course left for the honour and safety of our noble country.

CHAPTER XIII.

PRACTICAL REMEDIES — SANATORY MEASURES.

WHAT, then, do we propose? Only what has been recommended—advocated—enforced by all those who have taken a deep interest in the welfare of their fellow-men for long years past. That the legislature and the powerful classes should do justice—enlightened justice—to multitudes who toil and labour for them. We

do not ask for an extension of democratic privileges, for any invasion or change of property, but only for the trial on a large scale of those measures which have been found effectual for good, when tried in a confined district, or applied to a particular set of persons. We do not propose to enter into the details of any such remedial measures, but, 1st, to state the principle on which we think they should be based.

2nd. To enumerate them very briefly.

3rd. To suggest a mode by which we think and hope they might be gradually brought about.

Hitherto the principle on which our legislature has generally acted with respect to the working classes has been *to do nothing*, until great evils were found to exist; then to interfere with stern enactments against the glaring effects of *neglected causes*. Paupers and beggars appear; they are rebuked, imprisoned, and prosecuted.

Criminals multiply; vast jails and penitentiaries are erected, and a powerful and numerous constabulary force is organised in our towns and counties.

Disease and sickness widely prevails among our labourers in populous districts; hospitals, dispensaries, and all kinds of relieving charities are erected; but the causes of all these in-

creasing evils remain untouched and unheeded by our legislature.

Discontent widely prevails, sometimes taking the form of political movements, or trade combinations, sometimes of anti-machinery or anti-property riots; these are put down by laws of summary and perhaps necessary rigour, but the sources of this dissatisfaction and disturbances remain unexamined and unaltered.

In order to enable the working classes to take advantage of education, and to prevent that education being neutralized or rendered ineffectual by the physical evils which beset many of them, it appears necessary to amend their condition, increase their comfort, and protect their health.

Much would be done towards these desirable objects if the recommendations of the Health of Towns Commission are carried into effect by the Government.*

The next great practical measure for the benefit of the working classes, and that which is the root of all permanent improvement, is a good education afforded to all, and enforced or provided for all, under the inspection of Government. The Government and the legislature have

* A measure founded on these recommendations was brought into parliament by Lord Lincoln in 1845, and one of the same nature is now in the hands of Government.

hitherto, as regards the great masses of the working classes, acted on the principle of doing nothing, of non-interference, of leaving them to the care of voluntary assistance and direction, or with no assistance and direction at all.

To act thus is to abandon the first duty of Government—the duty of protecting the weak against the strong—of watching over the welfare of the many—of repressing crime and vice by eradicating ignorance, the fruitful source of both. What then should be done? It is the firm belief of many of the most intelligent and benevolent persons, confirmed by the increasing opinion of the people, that a great arrear of legislative care and protection are due to these neglected multitudes, and that the Government should immediately alter its course and take upon itself those duties it has hitherto forgotten.

Measures of Social Improvement.

We will now enumerate briefly the measures of social improvement applicable to the working people, which we firmly believe should be undertaken and carried out gradually or assisted by the government of the country, or local authorities, for the ultimate benefit of all classes.

Most of these measures have from time to time been suggested and recommended by

those who have given most attention to these subjects, and the increasing weight of public opinion is every year and hour gathering in their favour.

1ST. — GENERAL SANATORY MEASURES FOR THE PREVENTION OF DISEASE AND SUFFERING, AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE HEALTH AND COMFORT OF OUR WORKING CLASSES.

These measures, with the reasons for them, and the state of things requiring them, are detailed in the Reports of the Health of Towns Commission, from which we have made several extracts, and which are more and more engaging the attention of parliament and the public. The provisions and regulations of such sanatory laws should extend to all parts of the United Kingdom, and be gradually introduced into such of our colonies as may require them.

These sanatory regulations should be so devised or varied, as to extend their benefit to our smaller towns and villages, and groups of cottages, and every dwelling where poor men live.*

* If proper *legislative facilities* were given, by one general Act, it is believed that supplies of water, one of the first necessities for health and cleanliness, would be supplied by companies or private enterprise at a very low rate to all towns, and yet so as to yield an ample profit.

The working man's health and strength to labour is *his* only property, and ought in justice and policy to be protected by law, with the property of the other classes. If such sanitary regulations be judiciously carried out, it is our firm belief, that (besides incalculable advantages to the health and comfort of vast multitudes) they will remove legal difficulties to improvement, and give great inducement to *beneficial and profitable investment for capital at home* — of incalculable consequence to the country! It seems, also, almost certain that such regulations and facilities for improvement will call forth in every town and district numerous intelligent and benevolent volunteers and assistants, anxious to assist and co-operate with the efforts of the legislature; and who have only waited for light and leading, and wanted direction and guidance.

The generous and benevolent feelings of our Christian country have never been wanting where extensive evils and wide-spread suffering have been shown to exist, and where any effectual plan for removal and *prevention* have been brought forward. Hitherto the legislature has given little or no countenance or aid to any measures to *prevent* evil, but been contented with petty attempts at some doubtful palliation or relief in particular cases of glaring or grievous

calamity. The principal recommendations of the Health of Towns Commission are for enforcing, in all towns and populous places, a *good system of drainage and cleansing, an adequate and cheap supply of water, rules for the proper construction of workmen's dwellings, improved ventilation, the regulation of low lodging houses and periodical inspection of the sanatory condition of towns.* These recommendations are thirty in number, and the reasons are given for each.* Great pains were taken in the inquiry instituted in 1845, enormous evils and abuses were found to exist, capable of gradual removal by legislative and social improvements; the remedies stated in the resolutions referred to were repeatedly and carefully considered by the members of the Commission, and *unanimously* agreed to.

* Second Report of Commission, 1845. Bills have since been brought in to carry out these recommendations, and others are spoken of to fulfil them.

CHAPTER XIV.

EDUCATION.

THE next great measure necessary for the welfare of the working classes is, that good education, either afforded or *ascertained and enforced* by the Government, should be brought within reach of every one. It is the recorded opinion of the ablest and best men that most of the grievous evils, errors, and crimes, whose consequences we have seen faintly depicted, in former parts of this outline, arise from ignorance, which shows itself in various forms. A good education will go to the root and foundation of the mischief; it will, if rightly conducted, have its effect on every act of each year of life, of all under its influence, from the cradle to the grave.

All things which have power over the human mind, for good or for evil, are parts of education; example, instruction, and every circumstance early felt, which sways the soul to right or wrong. It is the duty of the Government to take care that the pliant dispositions of the young, especially of the working and *defenceless* classes, are protected from moral poison, and have placed within their reach such assistance

and guidance as may lead them to virtue. It will be of little comparative use to give instruction in schools to children, if all the advantages given are destroyed *out of school*, by the impressions and example they receive at home or abroad; if vice and profligacy, or dirt and wretchedness blunt all their feelings of decency and self-respect. This is *an important part of their education*; from the tainting contact of these evils they ought, as far as possible, to be shielded, by those who hold the power of protection.*

The health and strength, and therefore the spirits and happiness, of these young ones, should be cared for, not only by the sanatory measures respecting their homes, but by providing proper play-grounds and places of exercise within their reach, and by the authorities enforcing sufficient hours for relaxation. These things are very insufficiently attended to in most of the schools for the working classes throughout our large towns and populous districts. We have seen how entirely deficient these schools are in number and capacity for the children who ought to be afforded instruc-

* Hence effective measures for sanatory improvements in our towns and populous districts are so essential; promoting thereby habits of decency, cleanliness, and sobriety.

tion. But the instruction given is, besides, often of a very useless and indifferent kind. The children are constantly taught to repeat by rote what they do *not* understand; when explanation is given, it is frequently more puzzling than the matter explained. Books are used which have nothing in them of the least *interest* to the scholars. The Scriptures are continually used as a common class-book, out of which the children are taught to read and repeat verse after verse, without interest or reverence. Thus they early imbibe dislike and disgust to what ought to be the consolation and comfort of their future lives.

Lessons on objects and oral lessons, which might be made of great interest and amusement to the pupils, are very rarely used.*

Even in those schools which are the best managed, as in the Improved National and British Schools, the object sought after is to impart information and give habits of quickness in thought. In some of these schools (showing astonishing superiority over others) great success is attained in these points, and not unfrequently great readiness in calculation is shown, and considerable proficiency in a knowledge of

* Rev. Mr. Dawe's interesting account of a *self-supporting* school in Hampshire, where such lessons are used. 1847. Groombridge.

sacred history and geography. Yet even in these schools (the few from many, the scarcest and the best) the most important of all culture, the culture of the *dispositions* and *tempers* of these young creatures, is almost forgotten. Self-control, self-denial, gentleness, kindness, the social affections; the Christian virtues which, if practised, would so much increase the happiness of all, but especially of the humble and lowly; these are seldom attended to, and little regarded. Yet these are, as regards the comfort and welfare of the working classes themselves, and the peace and prosperity of the whole community, of far more consequence than all other learning and knowledge. *

We do not propose here to detail or discuss the method by which such desirable ends might be obtained. We are, however, fully persuaded that they may be, and ought to be, accomplished; and that if the legislature and richer classes do their duty in this most important point, they will reap a lasting and glorious reward.

Those, however, who are most earnest in favour of improving the working classes, and most convinced of the general benefits arising from a really good education afforded to these

* In some few Infant Schools, these views have been followed out with success. Mr. Wilderspin's book on this subject may be read with interest.

children, will be least sanguine of any *sudden* and immediate results from a process which must, from its nature, be gradual in its effects and spread over many years. Those also who have turned their serious and anxious attention to the subject of education, well know the great difficulties and prejudices which any *government* has to contend with who takes this great matter in hand.

Hitherto these obstacles have defeated all the endeavours which have been made by both the great parties in the state. These difficulties are not on account of the cost which education provided for the poor would require.* We are able to show that no measure could be more economical, or more truly a saving of present expense and outlay, than such a measure. It can also be demonstrated that in very many of our large towns, the humble classes now pay for a miserably deficient education, afforded to one-fourth the children who require instruction, a sum which is enough to defray the cost of an

* The cost of an adequate system of education for all the working classes has been variously calculated; we think it might be accomplished for a sum not exceeding one penny in the pound on the poor rate, and such a measure would, we think, eventually reduce the poor rate many times that amount.—See calculations on this subject in an able statement, showing the danger of neglect, and adducing statistical returns, by Rev. Mr. Bennet, 1846.

excellent course of instruction for all who want it*, provided such course be established on a good and cheap system under proper supervision.

The main difficulties in the way of establishing any general system of education for the working classes is the jealousy arising from party feeling and religious differences.

Many persons will be found who are much more anxious about forms, and small points on which Protestants of various creeds differ, than about those important and practical matters on which they are agreed.

We do not cast any blame on persons sincerely entertaining such opinions, but merely point out the great difficulties in the way of providing any *general* system of good education for the working classes.

We must bear in mind the education we are now considering is for the *working classes*; and of those classes, in many towns and populous places, and in some parts of the country†, the large majority belong to various denominations of Protestant Dissenters. In the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on

* Evidence of Mr. Kay Shuttleworth; Committee on Education, 1838. The Report of the Committee of Council of 1845 will be read with pleasure by all who take an interest in this subject.

† These accounts rest on returns sent from the

Education in 1838, a table is given of the numbers of children attending *Sunday schools* in some of the large towns, whence useful deductions may be drawn, after proper allowances.*

When we find that in some of our largest towns nearly double the number of children of the humbler classes attend Sunday schools connected with Dissenting congregations compared with those attending Church schools we must be led to the conclusion that it is totally impracticable to establish any general system to *exclude* the former, as some have desired.

The principal daily instruction (at all worthy

National and British Schools in each place, which substantially, though not exactly, agree as to the numbers of Children.

CHILDREN IN SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Place.	Established Church.	Dissenters.	Roman Catholics.
Manchester -	10,284	19,032	
Liverpool -	6,318	8,350	
Birmingham -	4,500	11,830	
Bristol -	2,631	8,477	
Brighton -	870	1,820	
Sheffield -	2,687	8,705	
Leeds -	4,130	11,886	
Wakefield -	500	1,384	
Exeter -	2,470	1,193	
York -	1,708	1,655	

* Vide note, p. 105., *antè*.

the name of instruction) now afforded to the poorer classes in populous towns is given through the means, and according to the respective systems, of two great and excellent societies long established and well known. One called the National Society, giving religious instruction according to the Established Church, and the other, the British and Foreign School Society, using the Scriptures, and giving religious instruction drawn from the Scriptures of a general nature, but such as not to be of an exclusive form, or to be so brought out as to give cause of objection to Protestant Dissenters.

The British and Foreign School Society is supported by many persons belonging to the Church, and by the great body of Protestant Dissenters; and the schools are attended by a considerable number of children whose parents belong to the Church, and a vast number of different denominations of Dissenters. The system of instruction in other points, in both these schools, is not essentially different where well carried out, by either of these societies; it brings the children very forward in useful knowledge, and is of great benefit to them, but seldom extends sufficiently to form their tempers and dispositions, or to implant and foster those Christian principles of *self-control* and *kindness* to others, which are the foundation of

the social affections, and which add so much to the happiness of all.

These two great societies have done inestimable good to the working classes, but do not extend their benefits to a quarter of those who stand in need of instruction. In many cases also there is a good deal of rivalry, and indeed jealousy, between the respective conductors and supporters of these schools. Both are chiefly supported by voluntary subscriptions, though some bequests and endowments by will have been made to each. As the nobility and great majority of the gentry and opulent classes belong to the Church, the National Society is generally much more rich in subscriptions for its support than the British and Foreign.

Both are recognized and assisted by the government and legislature, and receive portions of the annual grants made by Parliament to support and extend the education of the poor.* The children educated in many cases contribute a small weekly payment towards the expenses.

Besides the schools connected with these great societies, there are various others, varying much in the sort of instruction communicated; some charity schools are endowed by bequests, or supported by subscriptions, of corporate

* Annual Reports.

bodies or benevolent persons; almost all are exceedingly imperfect in the system they adopt, generally are much inferior to the schools of the societies described, and have no system of periodical inspection, or regular superintending authority to enforce improvement. Besides these, there are many day and dame schools*, paid for by the poor scholars, and generally of a very indifferent description. The Report of the Statistical Society of London, quoted by the late Committee on Education, says, "The information acquired in these schools cannot be said to amount to education; it can have but little effect in expanding the minds of the scholars, in teaching them to observe or reflect; it can exercise but little influence in forming their moral character," &c.†

On the whole, we shall come to the same conclusion now, as was arrived at by the Committee in 1838.

* Of education in that sense of the word that includes training, and the endeavour to perfect the faculties of the entire man, there is none.—*Rev. Mr. Allen's Report*, 1840.

† Were not the subject we are considering of a grave nature, we could adduce many striking and ludicrous statements to show the ignorance, unsufficiency, and self-conceit of many of the conductors of these schools; also to prove how dirty, close, ill ventilated and unhealthy these places are.

1st.—That the kind of education given to the children of the working classes is lamentably deficient.

2nd.—That it extends (bad as it is) to but a small proportion of those who ought to receive it.

3rd.—That, without some strenuous and persevering efforts be made on the part of Government, the greatest evils to all classes may follow from this neglect.*

Under the great difficulties which surround this most important question, it may appear presumptuous in any private person to give suggestions as to the nature of the measures required. One who considers this matter of the *first* and the *last* consequence to the welfare of his fellow-men will not be deterred, however, from offering with humility his opinion.†

It appears to us that the Government should not, for the sake of apparent uniformity and completeness, or even for the sake of carrying, *eventually*, a more perfect measure of education

* Returns to parliament show that 85 per cent. of the criminals committed could not read and write, or only very imperfectly. 1845.

† The author, having moved for, and acted as Chairman of the Committee of the House of Commons on Education in 1838, may perhaps be forgiven, as every day's experience since that time has strengthened his conviction on this point.

for the working classes, hazard its defeat or postponement for a considerable period; but this *must* be the case if they were to propose to abrogate or melt down into one uniform system the varied elements and forms of instruction now existing for the poor. By such an attempt they would probably enlist in opposition to them many conscientious and excellent persons, who have worked hard and long to bring to a certain degree of perfectness the schools or systems they have aided, and who feel some natural pride in the benevolent work of their minds and hands. Even if this opposition should not succeed, the Government would lose the great advantage of having, as willing, zealous, and active coadjutors, some of the most powerful and best voluntary assistants they can desire.

If, on the contrary, the Government establishes a sort of pattern system, to which a certain gradual though not exact conformity is desired and induced,—inviting aid from all quarters, offering aid to all who will avail themselves of such improvements as are necessary (and may be introduced by degrees, as the country, and managers, and masters become convinced of their benefit),—then such hostility would be neutralised, or changed into support.

The Government might enforce the system or the necessary part of the system they adopt, in every new district assisted by the State; and thus all essential improvements would gradually make their way and be extended in practice.*

Wherever a reasonable sufficiency of education according to the numbers did not exist, Government might, under certain regulations laid down by Parliament, take the initiative; or send down or appoint an assistant or inspector, at the request of a *certain number of rated inhabitants*, to assist and aid them in carrying out such a system of instruction as might be requisite. In all cases the Government should reserve the right of periodical inspection and examination of the schools assisted, and periodical reports of their state and requisites should be published from time to time.† We think,

* Most extensive and incalculable benefits have arisen from the attention paid by the Committee of Council to the subject of education; the establishment of a permanent secretary, indefatigable in his efforts in this cause, and the system of periodical inspection, to report as to the state of schools, has been of the greatest advantage. — In the Reports of the Committee of Council, and in other forms of information from that Office, much valuable knowledge is constantly brought before the public.

† An abstract of such Reports digested into a concise form, with a table of comparison with former years, might be useful.

also, where, after such reports, the system adopted continued grossly deficient in amount or defective in its nature, the Government, after due notice, should be empowered to establish a pattern school of its own. We doubt not that thus, without any collision with existing schools, or school societies, or patrons, vast improvements would gradually and yet speedily be worked out for the benefit of all. If the old and imperfect systems continued *without alterations and essential improvements*, then scholars would soon desert them to take advantage of better and cheaper schools. Thus the patrons of imperfect and defective places of education would be brought to reason by conviction forced upon them, without any direct interference with them.

The mode in which the funds should be raised, whether by grant, rate, voluntary contribution, payment of children, endowment, or any of these combined, would be matter of deep consideration, on which we do not presume here to put forth suggestions. Neither would we enter upon any plan for the equitable distribution or apportionment of public aid among different schools or systems of education, claiming aid within any particular district. Difficulties on these and other points

there will doubtless be, but *no* difficulties which may not be overcome by an honest and determined Government, anxious to work out the greatest of all blessings for the greatest number of its *hitherto neglected* subjects. These humble suggestions were written before the measures recommended by the Committee of Council were promulgated by Government in February, 1847. Those measures, especially an extended and improved system of inspection of existing schools, and the encouragement of schoolmasters and their pupils or apprentices, will do much towards the desired end, but are greatly inadequate to furnish education to multitudes in need of it: perhaps at present this is all that can be expected. There seems, however, no reason why a large *extension* of the grant of public money for education should not be made to each of the two great school societies (the National and British and Foreign), under due regulations, both agreeing to periodical inspection by approved persons. Thus would the most pressing wants of the most crowded cities (where both societies are found) be met. The assistance proposed to be given by Government to the establishment of industrial schools for the children at union houses will be a great advantage, and, if well carried out, serve as models

for others throughout the country. Whoever has seen the School of Industry at Norwood must wish to see that example followed.*

* *Vide* Report of E. C. Tufnell, Esq., and S. Tremembere, Esq., on the Schools of Industry at Norwood, Liverpool, and Manchester.— *Minutes of Committee of Council*, 1845, p. 287. *October*.

CHAPTER XV.

SOCIETIES FOR INSURANCE AGAINST ILLNESS OR
WANT OF EMPLOYMENT.

THE third great measure, which we think should be taken up by Government, assisted by the richer classes, should be an improved system or plan for *Improved Benefit Societies* in each county, with branches in each town and populous district, and each parish, where necessary. The security of such societies should be guaranteed by government; the officers in trust should give ample security; the rules and regulations should be well digested, simple, and easy of comprehension and practice, and so drawn out as to be fitted to insure the working classes at any age, on proportional payments, a good allowance in case of illness or other natural contingencies to which they are liable. Such societies should also grant and pay annuities, deferred or immediate, at reasonable prices, on government security. They should give the easy means of purchasing and securing small annuities for widows, and perhaps of insuring lives under certain circumstances, so as to bring

down within the knowledge and easy reach of the working classes those means of providing against illness and other natural contingencies which experience shows are of such incalculable advantage to all. Such societies should insure to the families or parties contributing, the attendance of a medical man and medical assistance, without any additional charge, and thus often *prevent* great evils coming. The rules should be so framed as to present a strong *inducement* to the working classes to join them. Experience shows the richer classes are often willing to contribute liberally to such purposes, but they know not how to begin such societies, how to frame the rules, or how to carry them out.

The existing Benefit Societies, imperfect as they are in many respects, have done great and extensive good.* They do not, however, embrace many points of great consequence in such institutions; many of them are so framed as

* The sums deposited in savings banks by individuals and provident clubs have increased from 328,000*l.* in 1818, to a million and upwards in 1820; in 1831, to 13,700,000*l.*; 1841, to 24,400,000*l.*; and in 1845, to 30,748,868*l.*: showing the willingness of the industrious classes to embrace opportunities for saving within their reach; yet many in rural districts do not yet understand these advantages.

to contain within them the seeds of certain and speedy dissolution; many are connected with public-houses, and under the management of interested or ignorant parties, who frequently break up the society and divide the funds, cheating the older members.

The establishment of such improved societies, aided and guaranteed by government, would be much assisted by intelligence spread among the working classes, through extended education and improved sanatory measures.

We would here suggest, also, that in introducing such provident societies, care should be taken not to injure such well-constituted clubs as now exist, but to allow them to join or be incorporated with the improved ones, on *favourable* terms, so as to induce them to take steps clearly for their own benefit.*

It must be quite needless to insist on the large advantages to the community of the establishment, extension, and improvement of benefit societies, or such clubs of this nature, because they have long been recognized, approved, and to a small extent assisted by the appointment of an officer to draw up their rules, and by other

* Some such county clubs, guaranteed and guided by the more educated and wealthy classes, have been already established in Wilts and some other counties.

facilities and advantages afforded by government, under the Benefit Societies and Saving Banks Acts.

If the Government were only to publish an approved plan, with rules, calculations, and printed forms, properly prepared under an Act giving facilities, securities, and inducements for their adoption, it would be found that often influential local parties of wealth and intelligence would take up and establish such improved and safe societies. * If, however, within a certain period, in any county, town, or place, this was not done, the Government might, on the request of a certain number of inhabitants, or, if necessary, without, send down some experienced and

* Instructions for the establishment of parochial societies for granting government annuities, with tables, pursuant to stat. W. IV. c. 14., have lately been printed by authority, and sent to any parties desirous of information ; but many know nothing of such instructions. In many places there is no one able or willing to take the trouble ; and we believe the measure recommended would be useful, if some officer were authorised by Government, or the local authorities, to suggest and assist in the establishment of provident societies for the working classes in every place where they were wanted. He might make a circuit through a convenient district, arranging and checking the accounts of each society, with their consent ; hereby preventing abuses, and saving much trouble and cost, by using an approved form.

authorised person to endeavour to establish such a society. Its introduction, if judiciously undertaken and properly constituted, would be hailed as a lasting benefit to all classes.

This measure, with those before spoken of, viz. sanatory reforms and education, would be the most pressing required *at present* in the rural districts, where employment is tolerably regular, and wages seldom vary much or very suddenly.

In manufacturing and mining districts, however, and in some other large towns, great variation occurs in the demand for labour, and in the amount of wages, consequent on fluctuations in foreign or home demand, in fashion, new inventions in machinery, and other causes, too long to enumerate. These fluctuations sometimes induce strikes of the workmen, which often cause great suffering, and result frequently in the injury or ruin of a district. Combinations of various kinds are entered into to keep up wages by those who are ignorant of the true causes of such fluctuations; and often riots, and discontent, and disturbances succeed. We have seen these evils existing and increasing, from year to year, as a greater proportion of our population is rapidly absorbed in manufacturing and mining employ-

nents.* Yet, has the legislature, or the educated and powerful classes, ever yet endeavoured to apply a practical remedy, or to do any thing to lessen an evil constantly recurring? “Any legislative or magisterial interference as to the *amount* of wages is clearly impracticable; but it is not impracticable to give *facility* and *inducement* to the industrious workmen to provide and insure *themselves* against these changes,—and we have never done it.”

In the principal manufacturing employments of the kingdom, the earnings, if only *spread* over a *period of several years*, are amply sufficient for the comforts and decencies of life.† But no means have been afforded by which bodies of workmen could, from high wages at one time, insure themselves an allowance to aid low wages or want of work at another.

Our benefit societies are all confined to what were called in the terms of the act, “*natural contingencies*.”

* The families of hand-loom weavers alone, most of whom depend on fluctuating employment, amount to no less than 800,000 persons. *Vide* Proportions, *antè*; and Hand-loom Weavers' Report, 1834.

† Report of Committee of the House of Commons on Manufacturers' Employment, July, 1830. This Committee was constantly attended by the late excellent Earl Spencer, then Lord Althorpe.

It is but quite recently that legal facilities have been afforded to the formation of societies to insure their members an allowance when out of work, and for other such purposes.* Under its enactments any body of workmen may join in a society or club for any purpose not illegal; their funds may be placed in a savings bank; they are protected against fraud, and may make rules and manage their own affairs.

Under this act, some clubs to insure against the loss of cows, &c., and others for fishermen to insure their boats, nets, &c., in storms, have been established.

We find, from Mr. Tidd Pratt, the barrister who certifies the legality of the rules (which is a check for the safety of the depositors), that the manufactuurers and mechanics in some districts are beginning to avail themselves of the provisions of this recent act to insure themselves an allowance when out of work, or when in short work.† This practice, if extended,

* 4 & 5 W. IV. c. 40.

† We regret, however, to find that the facilities given to the formation of societies for enabling parties to insure themselves an allowance when out of work, under 4 & 5 W. IV. c. 40., are curtailed by the recent act of 9 & 10 Vict. c. 27., which, whilst it contains many good provisions, throws great obstacles against *such* societies, requiring, "That the purpose shall be certified to be

would, we believe, be of the greatest benefit to employers and employed; though some of each might at first view it with suspicion.

We do not here propose to suggest or consider those rules or checks against abuse, which it might be necessary for the certifying bar-rister or the Government to lay down; but we feel confident that they might be so devised as to meet the approbation and confidence of intelligent workmen and benevolent employers; and that such societies, aided, guaranteed, and countenanced by Government, would gradually lessen, and in great measure prevent, one of the greatest causes of suffering and discontent which afflicts, from time to time, the manufacturing community.

Different classes and amounts of contributions, and proportionate allowanees, might easily be devised, either for different branches of the same trade or employment, or for different employments. The principle of *self-*

legal by her Majesty's Attorney or Solicitor General, (which costs much trouble, and 2*l.* 10*s.*) and which shall be allowed by one of her Majesty's Seeretaries of State as a purpose to which the powers and facilities of the Acts ought to be extended."—This creates great difficulties. There ought to be an approved printed form of rules for such societies, and every assistance afforded them, when *bona fide* instituted for provision when out of work.

insurance against want of work, or short work, would reach to changes of season or weather, if necessary. Government, or private subscribers or supporters of such new provident societies, might, by some slight premium or advantage given at first, easily induce intelligent workmen to join and contribute; and when once the benefits were felt, such premium might be gradually withdrawn.

We firmly believe that Trades Unions, by which different trades contribute, form a general fund, created from their own payments, to support or assist those of their members out of work, are, if *properly regulated*, of great advantage to all parties.

“It may be thought they will sometimes be used unfairly against the employers, by combinations of workmen. This may sometimes be the case, till the men (aided by better education) have intelligence enough to see through the selfish designs which often actuate a few discontented spirits.”

We must remember also that the fund will be large or small in proportion to former prudence, and the same prudence is likely to prevent the fund being used for bad purposes.

Strikes among workmen about wages are continually occurring, often attended with great violence, frequently permanently injuring the

trade of the place where they occur; as was the case at Sheffield, in Gloucestershire, at Kidderminster, and elsewhere*; acts of violence, preceded often by great suffering of the workmen, occur on almost every diminution of employment or attempt to lower wages, among those who may be called *unskilled* workmen, or who are unprovided with a fund to fall back upon.†

As much prejudice exists on this subject, and the matter is of great practical importance, let us see how different the operation of a strike is, where such a fund is provided, and where it is not. In the first case, the workmen, thinking themselves ill used (which may or may not be the case), refuse to accept the lower wages offered; but, having a fund to go to, they receive an allowance from the club, which, though only half their usual wages, saves them from actual suffering, and, with what little they can pick up or make, supports them for a time, according to the amount of their former prudence and provision: presently, however, the demand for their

* Account of Strikes in the Potteries in 1836, where a loss was incurred to the workmen of 155,000*l.*—1st vol. Statistical Society, London.

† Account of Effects of a Strike for Wages at Nottingham, by Mr. Fitkin. At Norwich, and elsewhere.—Report of Constabulary Force Commission, 1839.

labour increases (the goods they made being worked off), and they are taken into employment again, or it may be the slackness of employment continues; but their fund gradually diminishes, their allowance is shortened, and they are *duly admonished* by these circumstances that they must be obliged to take the diminished wages, or to work *short hours*, or a smaller number at the same rate of wages, with a small allowance from their fund. But then time has been given for consideration; time has been allowed for negotiation between the masters and men, and to adjust differences. They will have been able to learn whether the attempts to drop their earnings arose from an unfair desire of gain among the masters (as the men generally think *at first*), or from a *real* diminution in demand for the article they manufacture, which, if so, can only be sustained in price by a less supply.

Whatever the result, however, it will be accomplished with much less irritation, violence, and misery, than would otherwise have arisen.

Now let us take the case of a strike where no such provident society exists; the workmen have no provision to fall back upon, their humble means are soon exhausted, they pawn their clothes and furniture, perhaps beg, or their children get some parish aid, and with a

fresh sense of injustice done them, they are *immediately brought to want*. Hence they have recourse frequently in such cases to violence, threats, and riot*; they have had no time for negotiation, or to learn the *real* cause of the diminution of wages, and in all such cases their sufferings and those of their families are very great.

Before any facilities were given for such provident societies, trade clubs, intended to keep up wages, and give an allowance when out of work, existed in several of the best paid and skilful trades, as among the brushmakers, tailors, coachmakers, hatters, &c.; and in these trades we shall find, whatever the fluctuation of wages, there seldom were any riots and disturbances, and the sufferings of their families were much less.†

It is true they often acted unjustly; they were ignorant of the true causes of fluctuation (*for who has ever afforded them the means of knowledge?*); yet, nevertheless, on the whole, there was great advantage to the community

* The evil effects to both masters and men are shown in many striking examples in the Report of the Constabulary Force Commissioners, p. 140, &c.

† Report to the House of Commons on Manufacturers' Employment. 1830.

and themselves in these provident trade societies.

For a long time these were forbidden by the unjust Combination Laws*, which are now repealed, and since the character of the clubs has improved; and they ought to be extended, assisted, and encouraged *under proper regulations*. An additional reason for some such provision is the fact stated by the Hand-loom Weavers' Commissioners, that the introduction of the power-loom into cotton fabrics has, during its gradual introduction, caused much suffering to the destitute hand-loom weavers, and that the same process will assuredly take place, sooner or later, with respect to hand-loom weavers employed in silks, linens, and woollens. It must indeed be evident, from reflection and experience, that great fluctuations in the demand for labour must be expected to arise from time to time, among the masses of our people occupied as artisans or manufacturers. That such fluctuations, unless duly *provided for*, must be the cause of wide-spread misery and evil, and that it is one of the first duties of an intelligent and benevolent government to *induce, assist, and encourage* the working classes *themselves to provide against calamities*, con-

* Report on Combinations, House of Commons, 1836.

stantly recurring, and the prevention of which is beyond the power of man.

The extent of any such provision against fluctuation in employment (or against any other evil incident to the poor man's life), whether by societies or individuals, will be just in proportion to *his intelligence and forethought*, and *therefore to the instruction* afforded him. Hence we see the paramount necessity of a *real* education being given to every working man, and the obvious duty of the state to enforce or provide it.

CHAPTER XVI.

EXERCISE AND OCCASIONAL AMUSEMENTS FOR THE
LABOURING PEOPLE.

ANOTHER measure necessary for the welfare of the working class (especially those in large towns and populous districts) is the means of occasional and harmless relaxation from their constant toil — the power to enjoy in innocent comfort with their families their few holydays from many days of labour. At present, in many districts and most great manufacturing towns, their only place of refuge and short-lived enjoyment is a public-house, or place connected with some drinking shop; and yet we too often reproach and punish them for inebriety, the natural consequence of our own neglect!

Since the beginning of the century the population has vastly increased, and every space in the suburbs of many of our towns has been built over, and till quite recently no provision whatever has been made to reserve or form public walks or open spaces in the vicinity of

such populous districts, where the middle and humbler classes might take some exercise, and breathe fresh air on their Sundays or holydays.

We remember when the first proposal for Committee on Public Walks in the Vicinity of Large Towns was brought forward in 1837 in the House of Commons, the proposer was considered by many as an impracticable and troublesome person, and scarcely heard with patience.

The subject, however, afterwards received more attention; the Report of the Committee obtained, gradually made its way; and several of its recommendations have been followed, though a very lamentable deficiency of public walks still prevails in the vicinity of most of our populous towns. Although some noble exertions have been made by government for affording additional open spaces for the people in the neighbourhood of London*, and a small grant has been made to assist local exertions in provincial towns; yet what has hitherto been done

* The Victoria Park to the east of London, and Primrose Hill to the north, both places recommended in the Report, have been obtained, and great improvements made elsewhere. Near Manchester, three fine public parks or walks, purchased by subscription, aided by a small grant from government, were opened to the public in the last year.

is utterly inadequate to the just wants of millions of workmen who contributed by their constant industry to the increasing wealth of the country.*

The importance of this subject has been duly insisted on by the Commissioners on the Health of Towns, &c. in their recent Report and recommendation.

It is not, however, so much by grants or gifts of public money that Government might

* There is another point of view worthy consideration, showing the advantages derived from such public parks or walks—viz. their tendency to increase a desire for good clothes and neat apparel, and to stimulate the industry necessary to obtain them. It would be quite useless to show that men (and still less the gentler sex) among the richer and middle classes do not wear clothes *merely* to cover them and shield them from cold; but partly to display their taste, and themselves and their children, in what they think an advantageous way. To do this in the vicinity of large towns, public parks and walks are essential; and the same motives, according to their different stations and means, should be allowed to act on the working classes also. Thus would their innocent enjoyments be increased; propriety and neatness of appearance kept up, and a reasonable desire for *artificial necessities* assisted,—thereby manufactures are encouraged, and a great help to the progress of civilization given: nor will any enlightened statesman or benevolent man condemn or despise the consideration of such motives, which act beneficially on every other class of society.

advance this object (and this, we think, they ought to do within reasonable limits), as by giving facilities, removing difficulties, and affording judicious assistance and information, in an accessible form, to enable the people to help themselves.

Lands or funds, dedicated to such purposes, should be free from rates and taxes, and if by donation or subscription a certain amount were raised for a public walk or park, there should be a power to raise the remainder by loan, redeemable from the rates, on the consent of a certain proportion of rate-payers.

Other suggestions to facilitate these objects might easily be made, and should be considered, and, if approved, carried out by Government or the local authorities.

The formation of parks or public walks in the vicinity of our large towns would undoubtedly contribute greatly to the health, comfort, and enjoyment of the working classes; but would not afford them opportunity for occasional relaxation and amusement, to which they are fully entitled, and which all *other* classes at one time or other enjoy.

The labouring people in towns are now cut off, by the change of circumstances and inclosure of all neighbouring lands, from par-

taking in or even beholding those athletic exercises and sports, in which their forefathers took great delight.

We do not know if it be possible to restore to them, by some benevolent arrangements, these opportunities of *occasional* amusement. At present, however, they are driven to their only remaining opportunity of congregating for out of doors amusement or excitement. They frequent in great numbers those races, fairs, wakes, and periodical merry-makings, which still are kept up in the vicinity of London and our great towns.

Yet many benevolent persons, who have visited these scenes, will have had great cause in very many cases to lament the supineness and almost culpable indifference of the local authorities or ruling powers, whoever they be, to all those regulations most essential to the welfare, comfort, and happiness of the honest, moral, and industrious of the working classes there assembled.

In many cases, and especially in the near vicinity of London, it seems to have been the desired object to neglect all proper regulations, so that the disorders and evils arising from an uncontrolled assemblage of many of the worst characters, should give a *pretext* for putting down the *meeting altogether*. An

effectual and judicious system of police would protect the well-conducted families of our respectable workmen and artisans from the contamination of crowds of pickpockets and shameless prostitutes. A stop would then be put to gambling; a discreet check used against intoxication, and other disorders often incident to such meetings.

Some judicious caution would perhaps be required as to the character or conduct of persons allowed to exhibit shows and booths; proper rules, as to the hours of closing the meeting would be enforced, and such regulations carried out as were deemed necessary.

When convinced that such provisions were intended for *their benefit*, we are assured that the vast majority of our industrious classes would give them their ready and constant support, more especially where the constables or police are chosen, maintained, and controlled by the rate-payers of the district, or those whom they have elected for the purpose.

We may all remember how well the varied population of London behaved at her Majesty's Coronation, when Hyde Park was thrown open for three days and nights. Shows, booths, and exhibitions were displayed within the inclosure, and multitudes (*well conducted and well behaved multitudes*) of all classes,

crowded to the Fancy Fair (as it was termed) held within its precincts.

We cannot believe it to be below the dignity of a paternal Government, nor unworthy the benevolent attention of the richer and more powerful classes, to *take order* for permitting, promoting, assisting, and providing, if necessary, opportunities for occasional amusement, relaxation, and some innocent excitement, to relieve the unvaried toil of those workmen and labourers to whom they owe so much. Such objects were not considered unworthy the freest and most enlightened nations of ancient days, and we believe them equally required by enlightened policy and just benevolence.*

We feel assured that if the means for enjoying *regulated relaxation* were duly afforded to

* Laying aside, for a moment, the grounds of Humanity, some regulated occasional amusements should surely be provided within reach of our increasing multitudes of workmen as a matter of policy. It is as natural and needful for them to seek some amusement and excitement as for the other classes to do so; and if not assisted and guided by the Government or the rich, they will fly to demagogues and dangerous courses. Mr. Burke said wisely, "Contested elections were the safety valves of the Constitution." It is alike wise and benevolent to provide, in regulated amusements for the many, *safety valves* for their buoyant spirits and eager energies when let loose from the bonds of labour.

those now condemned to constant toil, they would well repay our kindness by renewed and refreshed industry, improved habits, and those kindly feelings between different classes, now too often wanting.

In such a cause we shall not fear a little ridicule or misrepresentation ; such experiments have not often been tried among us yet ; where they have been tried, with reasonable preparation and caution, they have been found successful, though only having to rest on the efforts of individuals, or, at most, of a few persons of the same vicinity. Thus, the benevolent efforts of the Earl of Ellesmere in Lancashire, of Lord Dartmouth near West Bromwich, and of some others, to provide *regulated* amusements for the working classes in their respective neighbourhoods, have been received with gratitude and crowned with success.*

But we have a great *arrear* to make up in this respect towards these neglected classes ; we feel confident that if an effort be made by Government and the richer classes to supply this defect in our present state, it will be a

* In Scotland, at the Highland meeting, prizes are given by the gentry for feats in athletic exercises, running, &c. The whole is admirably regulated, and affords us a useful example.

source of true economy instead of expense. If proper regulations, facilities, and countenance be given by the legislature and the rich to provide such occasional sources of amusement, we feel certain the working people will be willing to *defray all the cost incurred* by a small payment on admission, or some other form of slight contribution. This would be infinitely *cheaper* to them than the extortion now suffered to attain any kind of amusement within their reach, and they would be withdrawn from constant temptation to drunkenness and vice, and their wives and families would be enabled to accompany them and share their harmless holyday.*

We cannot presume here to enter upon the details necessary to be carefully considered, for carrying out successfully this object on a large scale; such would form fit matters for the deliberation of those *in earnest* in the cause. Legal facilities, inducement, and encouragement

* It must be quite needless to show the necessity for occasional relaxation from labour among the working classes. We have been assured by an intelligent master, who had worked his way to fortune and independence, that, when a journeyman, there were times when after long toil and confinement he found it as an *absolute necessity of life*, to rest and refresh himself for a day or two, by relaxation and amusement.

would be required *at first*; but if light and leading were afforded by the Government, the generous and good feelings of the richer classes would require little stimulus to urge them to come forward in their respective vicinities to promote the happiness and welfare of their humbler neighbours, and thereby to increase and ensure their own.

In such occupations and employments, in aiding the Government to carry out any of these various measures for the welfare of the working people, we think those born to power and fortune might derive lasting sources of enjoyment and interest.

Thus would many of them be rescued from the bitter pains of laborious idleness, or the tedium of doing nothing, the languor of listlessness and ennui. To such efforts they would be able to look back, in the evening of their lives, with something more of satisfaction than to mere days of hunting or visiting, and nights of feasting; or even to the more refined and polished apology for vacaney, which those exhibit, who spend their time in the perusal of that light literature which leads to nothing.

If, by means of sanatory measures and social improvements, we raise the condition of working men; if, by education, we increase their intelligence, and, by proper relaxation, reward their

toil; is it not reasonable to suppose they will work better and with greater steadiness and cheerfulness? *Now*, they labour to support existence: *then*, they will work to enjoy it. Is it not found that industry constantly improves as it is repaid and rewarded? But the working classes form *nine tenths* of the whole community. May we not, then, from their increased activity, energy, and exertion, expect a vast augmentation of the wealth of the country, when their strong and willing sinews are strung to labour, when hope cheers them at their toil, and points to their just reward?

Such men, fresh with renewed vigour, and *again* fast bound in attachment to the institutions of their *protecting* country, we should then see, not by hundreds or thousands, but by millions, working around us. Their welfare would be our wealth, their health would be our strength, their contentment our security. As they improved in the scale of comforts, they would be every day more able and willing contributors to the revenue and capital of the kingdom; neither of which can increase as they ought to do if the most numerous and industrious of *all* classes is degraded, depressed, and dissatisfied.

We believe most firmly that if *enlightened justice* be done to these multitudes by social regulations for their benefit, and *real* education

for themselves and their children *, we should see an astonishing augmentation in the revenue gradually take place, and a diminution of the proportionate burthen of taxation.

We should find in such measures a mine of wealth *among ourselves*, exceeding in its beneficial products what the most sanguine speculators in the golden ore of the New World could ever expect.

* Including, in that wide word, all good influences on the mind and conduct of man from childhood to old age; derived from good government, and the aid and example due from the higher classes.

CHAPTER XVII.

POLICY OF ESTABLISHING A BOARD OR COMMISSION
TO WATCH OVER THE WELFARE OF THE WORK-
ING CLASSES.

WITH a faint outline and feeble pen, we have thus endeavoured to sketch out some of those measures, for the permanent improvement of the condition of the working classes, which seem necessary to advance their comfort and happiness, and to insure our own safety and prosperity.

Most or all of these suggestions have been brought forward before, and urged by other and abler persons; but the time seems now ripe for action, and we feel strong and undoubting persuasion that longer delay is dangerous. Many other suggestions on other points, but of the same nature and tending to the same end, might easily be made; and will occur to those who *earnestly* and *honestly* address themselves to this great matter.*

* Some method of lessening the cost of the title and conveyances of small portions of land: at present the expense bears most unfairly an *humble* purchasers, and generally prevents their having "a stake in the hedge."

We have seen in the former parts of this humble work, the neglected, miserable, and degraded state of large bodies of our working classes; and the "enormous and increasing evils" thence resulting. These descriptions are taken from no idle declamations of discontented men, but are fearful statements of Commissioners, selected by successive Governments, or Committees appointed and approved by parliament. The earnest attention of the country is now beginning to be directed to practical remedies to prevent dangers, which every year become more threatening.

Some of these remedies we have ventured to enlarge upon; others might easily be added; but no reasonable man, who has considered the extent of the subject, the inveteracy and long standing of the mischief to be removed, and the difficulties to be encountered, can come to any other conclusion, than that the remedial process, even if taken in hand earnestly and immediately, must be a work of time and of detail, and requiring great patience and perseverance.

We will add our deep conviction, — founded on long observation of the slow progress of remedial measures for social evils, unconnected with party feelings, and some experience in parliament, — that the functions of the usual

offices of Government, or the means afforded by Parliament* under existing circumstances, and the great press of ordinary business, are inadequate to arranging, digesting, and shaping into form, in any reasonable time, such prin-

* The truth is, that measures to promote social improvements and benefit large bodies of the working classes, unless linked with some political or party question, excite very little interest in parliament. It is not easy on such subjects to obtain a hearing, very difficult to work out a Report, and next to impossible to carry through the legislature any remedial measure; however strong the case, and clearly justice may require it; unless the subject be taken up by the ministers of the day. They have generally their hands full of matters pressing on their attention, or are occupied with some plan of party contest where all are excited by party interests. Sometimes, indeed, social evils among the masses become so glaring as to be costly and dangerous to the rich, when Committees are appointed and large Reports produced; but if the danger passes away, the remedies are neglected and the evils forgotten. Occasionally, indeed, an earnest man (he is called a benevolent *Enthusiast*) almost unaided, with firm perseverance, year after year, brings forward some subject in parliament connected with improvement of large masses of his humbler fellow subjects; and at length obtains a hearing; and perhaps at last, popular attention being drawn to the matter, or it becoming dangerous longer to neglect it, ministers carry out some remedy. Much more often, wearied with disappointment and worn out with delays, he gives up the fruitless effort.

ciples and details of remedies, as seem absolutely necessary. Such measures, when worked out and approved, might be carried through the legislature by the ministers of the Crown. At present the constant occupations of ministers, and the distracting duties of government, give *them* no sufficient leisure for duly weighing and considering the various points to which we have referred.

Besides those matters adverted to, there are now constantly arising fresh subjects of consideration, and new suggestions and proposals, bearing on the *welfare of vast bodies of our working people*. All these require constant and careful attention, and to be *reported* on by competent parties somewhat experienced as to the views to which they relate, and having leisure to weigh carefully the propositions submitted to them. We feel assured that the only satisfactory way to meet these difficulties, would be by the appointment by Government of a permanent Board or Commission of fit persons, interested and experienced in these subjects, to whom these matters would be referred, and who would, without delay, employ themselves in devising, and as far as possible perfecting, remedial measures applicable to the most pressing of the evils described. Such a Board or Commission would act of course under the

authority and control of the Government, with whom they could consult on all points of difficulty.

The Government would thus be relieved from a great mass of labour; as to inquiries into facts, discussions as to different remedies proposed, and numerous details as to legislative alterations, which would devolve on the Board. Thus the work desired would be perfected much sooner and better than could be possible in the ordinary mode.

We believe several parties qualified to sit on such a Commission might be found, quite willing to act, if permitted, *without salary*; and if the Commission was constituted (as we submit it ought to be, to obtain the confidence of the country) of competent experienced persons, *without reference to political opinions*, and be independent of the change of ministers, we think such would *certainly* be the case. However this be, we feel confident that the moderate cost of such a standing Commission for the consideration of matters *beneficial to the working classes* would be repaid over and over by the benefit derived and the satisfaction given. Their reports, if properly drawn, would give a valuable abstract of the facts and reasoning bearing on every extensive evil capable of removal affecting large bodies of the people.

Such reports would be storehouses for arguments in favour of well-considered legislative measures; they would suggest the most approved methods by which the rich and liberal could *really* and permanently improve the condition of their humbler fellow subjects, *without* impairing their independence or weakening their spirit for future exertion; and they would by clear statements, and lucid reasoning, serve to dispel prejudice, and remove unfounded opinions on many topics of great consequence to the welfare of the whole community.

The functions of such a Commission would be untainted by party feelings or differences. Their object would be quite distinct from those of the Poor Law Commission, the one being to regulate the relief of misery, the other to devise measures for preventing it.* Their duties would chiefly be confined to devising practical remedies for great social evils, which lapse of time and change of circumstances (unheeded by the legislature of the country) have cast upon large bodies of the people. Such a Commission ought moreover to look a

* Neither would the proposed Board or Commission have power to lay down any regulations until sanctioned by parliament, or to do more than inquire into facts and to digest remedies to be submitted to the Government.

little *beyond* the present hour, to watch “events which cast their shadows before,”—to prepare with benevolent forethought remedies to lessen approaching mischiefs, without waiting till they assume a fearful and threatening aspect. If we had had such a Commission, duly constituted, in existence thirty or forty years ago (with the watch of public opinion kept on its proceedings), is it possible we could have had such extensive and lamentable evils (preventable evils) pressing down large bodies of the people, as we have seen exist among us?

The establishment of such a Commission for the benefit of the working classes would, we believe, be hailed with gratitude by all the intelligent among them. When its objects were properly understood, we doubt not, that much valuable information, and many useful suggestions for *practical* improvements, would emanate from the more educated and intelligent among the workmen, and be communicated to their Commission.

In the gradual progress and advancement of the varied and wonderful machinery to assist human labour, now carried to such an astonishing perfection in our country, it has been remarked that many, if not most, of the successive suggestions of improvement have been

made by the working classes *themselves*, who directed or superintended the machinery.

In like manner we believe, if these same classes have fair play, — if their confidence be won, and they are convinced we are really acting for their permanent benefit, — that we shall often find among their ranks many able coadjutors in the cause of improvement, and efficient assistants for preserving order.

Prejudices are to be overcome, ignorance dispelled, and, doubtless, time and perseverance will be requisite in this, as in any great undertaking, to accomplish what we desire; but we must never forget the noble object we are aiming at. It is to improve permanently the condition of millions of our fellow men, now suffering and neglected.

In the varied inquiries and gradual improvements which it would be necessary to make for these purposes, we feel certain that the greatest assistance would be given to Government, and any Commission they might nominate, by benevolent and intelligent persons of the higher and middle ranks, in various parts of the country.* These would find a

* The benefit derived from such parties in the protracted and painful inquiries of the Commission on Health of Towns was very great, especially from the clergy and the medical profession.

constant source of increasing interest in employments arising out of such proposed improvements, and to which they would often devote a portion of their leisure as volunteers, and thereby add greatly to their *own* happiness; remembering that wise saying of an able and benevolent man, now lost to us, "That property has its duties as well as its privileges."

Such pursuits, we are assured by the highest authority, confirmed by experience, are the true foundations of happiness; and are, to a certain degree, within the reach of every human being: for every one may contribute, more or less, towards the welfare of some one else.

If we wanted a few words of direction how best to consult *our own* interest, they would be comprised in a single line, commanding us "To do justice, and love mercy."

CONCLUSION.

IN concluding the "Plea" which we have ventured to submit to the public, we would earnestly call attention to the *principles* which

regulate, in great measure, the welfare of the working classes in all countries; and which, though acknowledged in the abstract by the most intelligent among us, but slowly make their way into the business of life, and are greatly neglected in legislation and practice.

It is on the due proportion between the capital and the population of any country, that the wages of labour, and therefore the state of the working classes (if they be fairly protected and educated), will chiefly depend.

The amount and increase of capital will depend partly on the natural advantages of a country, partly on its acquired advantages; among the *first* of which are *freedom* and *security* for property.

It is found by experience that capital increases best where Government interferes least in its direction, management, and investment.

It increases according to the care, intelligence, and industry of those who manage it. Their efforts will be proportioned to their prospect of success, in the enjoyment of what they may acquire, and in its secure investment at a reasonable rate of profit.

An enlightened Government will not interfere in such matters, except to remove all obstacles from the full enjoyment of the proceeds of industry, and all impediments to the

increase and investment of capital, owing to impolitic laws, regulations, and usages.*

Capital may be increasing, as in England; stationary as in Holland; or retrograde, as in Spain; and, according to these varied circumstances will the population, in *ordinary circumstances*, be also increasing, stationary, or retrograde.

The increase of capital is, however, but *one* element in the welfare of a country. It is the *due proportion* between capital and numbers that chiefly gauges the condition of the labourer. Ought, then, a wise Government to attempt to check, encourage, or regulate the increase of population?

Reason, experience, and observation show that any such interference is impolitic and mischievous. If the mass of the people are only *duly protected and educated* to a knowledge of their real condition and prospects,

* The necessity for a separate Act of Parliament for every inclosure, exchange, road, canal, and railway, and for town drainage, paving, cleansing, supply of water, gas, &c., has much limited *home investments*: a General Act for each, *properly drawn*, would, in most cases, guard public and private interests, as *now* is the case for inclosures. Our law of partnership, and the costly and complex laws relating to titles and conveyances of land, have a like effect.

Government may safely leave them, in this respect, to themselves.

It is, however, the part of an enlightened Government to afford to the mass of its subjects (especially those of the humbler and more defenceless classes) *due protection and the means of real education!* They should be protected from fraud, oppression, and all that can destroy or injure their health, the strength of their bodies, or the moral tone of their minds, as far as this can be effected by judicious social laws and regulations.

In like manner, the means of real education should in some way be insured to them, inspected and enforced by the State.

According as these duties have been fulfilled or neglected by the Government and governing classes, will be the forethought, moral feeling, self-restraint, and virtue of the labouring body. In the aggregate it will be found that according to the possession and influence, or the absence of these qualities (in ordinary times), will be the proportion of population to capital more or less nicely adjusted.

But it is on this *due* proportion that the welfare of the working classes must greatly depend. When this proportion is not preserved, population presses very closely on the

means of subsistence, and constant and severe suffering ensues.

It is an important modern discovery, now supported by constant observation and experience, that moral and physical degradation, far from acting as a check to the increase of numbers and the perpetuity of the suffering body, has the effect, by removing all forethought and self-respect, of encouraging and stimulating illicit engagements and improvident marriages, and keeping up the numbers constantly pressing close on the means of subsistence.*

Thus have the Government and the influential classes (by means of due protection and education) *indirectly* the power of assisting to adjust population to capital, and thereby promote the *happiness of all*.

The practical effect of such "enlightened justice done," as far as regards our manufacturing community, we shall find in a description of the state of the labouring classes at Hyde, Cheshire † — "*No pawn-shops! — no dram-shops — in every house the Scriptures.*"

* Report on Health of Towns, 2d Report, vol. 185. Mr. Chadwick's Reports, &c. &c. Reports of separate Commissioners on Health of Towns, &c. in 1844 and 1845.

† By Mr. Fitkin. — Reports of Statistical Society of London, 1838.

The melancholy contrast to this exception we may see in almost every one of our populous increasing cities throughout the realm.

If we would view the effects of these different systems in a wider field, we have only to examine the improved portions of Scotland or Switzerland, and compare them with the west and south of Ireland.

We have not intended to cast blame on any particular party in the State. We have endeavoured, without exaggeration, to depict the depressed and degraded condition of vast bodies of our workmen — the consequence, as we think, of the neglect of social improvements for their benefit, called for alike by justice, humanity, and policy, at the hands of their rulers.

The penalties of such neglect in the end always fall on the community. We have ventured to try to call attention to the subject, in hopes some one of greater influence and talent will take up the cause, rather than from a vain expectation that much will yet be done.

Some years' experience in parliament — a few more in the busy world — and the lessons of history, alike have taught us how little real interest the bulk of mankind, or the great majority of popular assemblies, take in the

welfare of their humbler fellow subjects, *unless when excited by party motives.*

Still we will hope for the best, and shall be amply rewarded for our humble effort, if, in some obscure suburb of some crowded city, or the far hamlet of some distant parish, *one* of these neglected ones is benefited through our means.

THE END.

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